The Psychology of Power, Fear, and Silent Domination

THE FORBIDDEN ART OF INTIMIDATION

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Trigger Warning

This book contains detailed accounts of physical violence, police brutality, psychological manipulation, and trauma. Reader discretion is advised.

Preface

I wrote this book to my future self. I hope you're still deeply interested in human psychology, and I hope you haven't given up on your dreams. I know that at the moment I'm writing these lines, everything feels harder, but I believe I'll make it. I also hope you've found answers to the questions that kept you awake at night, and that you feel less alone.

“It is an unfortunate fact that we can secure peace only by preparing for war.”

John F. Kennedy

"***The ultimate aim of martial arts is not having to use them.***"

Miyamoto Musashi

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Introduction

I’m not a fan of introductions.

I never know how to start them, and you probably don’t enjoy reading them anyway.

Let’s be honest.

Who reads a book about intimidation?

Maybe you’re being pressured at school, at work, or by someone who thinks they can control you. If that’s the case, please talk to a friend, an adult, or someone you trust. Don’t face everything alone, and definitely don’t do anything that could harm you or anyone else. Your safety matters more than any strategy in this book. So let me just say one thing before we begin: whatever you’re facing right now, you’ll be fine.

Trust that.

This is a book about the oldest currency of humanity.

The force that moves armies, shapes empires, rewrites borders, bends presidents, destroys families, and raises new civilizations from the ashes of the old.

Long before I studied strategy, I lived it. I didn't learn about intimidation from history books or political theory. I learned it the same way most powerful people do: through survival. Through the kind of moments where the world stops being abstract and becomes a negotiation between life and death. Through silence, threat, chaos, and the instinctive understanding that every human—whether a child in the street or a general in a war room—moves for one reason:

Fear of losing something.

This book is NOT for you if:

You can't read more than 100 pages

Your intention is to physically hurt people for no reason

This book IS for you if:

You're deeply interested in psychology and human behavior

You want to protect yourself from manipulation or pressure

You lead a company, an organization, or a mission where the stakes are high and enemies are real

So here's what you'll find inside:

Chapter 1 explores what intimidation really is

Chapter 2 breaks down how it works, why it works, and how people fake it

Chapter 3 teaches you how to detect it and defend yourself

In this book, I will simplify complex subjects to make them accessible to everyone. I'll draw examples from history, current events, scientific studies, mythology, and even my own life to demonstrate that the principles we're exploring are universal and timeless. Whether we're looking at a world war, a street fight, or a personal challenge, the same core laws of human nature apply. Don't be distracted by the changing contexts or eras—focus on the underlying patterns. We will also examine the strategies of some controversial figures, analyzing their actions without moral judgment.

Have a good reading day ;)

Chapter 1- The Secrets of Power

The Silent Weapon

It was 10 p.m., Sunday, June 13th, 2021, in Douala.

I opened my eyes slowly and lifted my head just enough to see the gun pointed at me.

Everything around me went silent—except the heavy voice of the police officer standing over me, shouting something I couldn't fully process. Maybe I was too focused on one simple question: *was I about to die at fourteen?*

I was lying on the floor of my parents' house when he said it:

"I'm going to shoot you in the fucking head in five… four…"

Then I heard my mother screaming outside as another officer attacked her. He kept counting: "…three… two…"

"One."

Boom.

Cameroon has harsh laws and even harsher systems. You might think what happened that night was an act of pure violence—and in a way, it was.

But that's not how I really see it.

What happened was intimidation—a failed, chaotic, brutal attempt to break a young boy's will. We'll come back to that night in *Chapter 2* to look at the mistakes that officer made, and the long-term psychological damage that moment carved into me.

But before we go deeper into the story, we need to understand what intimidation truly means.

So according to Wikipedia, Intimidation is a behavior and legal wrong which usually involves deterring or coercing an individual by threat of violence. I can't fully agree with this definition; I see things differently.

Intimidation is a dangerous form of power, used as a last resort to avoid direct confrontation. While often harmful, it can prevent far greater damage. We'll explore why it qualifies as a form of power and look at different types of power later in this chapter.

What matters for now is this: intimidation shows a glimpse of something terrible—a possible future— and forces an opponent to act in a way that allows them to escape that outcome. And compared to the confrontation it prevents, intimidation usually causes far smaller injuries.

Think of it like delivering a minor blow in war to warn an enemy that if they advance, you won't hold back next time. Machiavelli famously said you should never inflict a small injury on an enemy, which makes intimidation seem like a bad strategy. But that isn't the full picture. Machiavelli advises total destruction only because he assumes the goal is to eliminate the enemy completely, as Robert Greene also emphasizes.

“Crush your enemy totally” Robert Greene, 48 laws of power.

But total destruction demands enormous strength, resources, and pressure — and often leads to more damage than expected. Intimidation, when done correctly, avoids this. A well-executed threat plants fear deep in the opponent’s heart — you’ll see exactly how those mechanisms work in Chapter 2 — and once fear takes hold, they’re unlikely to challenge you again.

“The supreme art of war is to subdue the enemy without fighting.” Sun Tzu

Intimidation lets you conserve your energy and break your enemies. Never fight someone who is already afraid of you.

Why waste your time and energy fighting when you can outsmart your opponent and keep your hands clean?

When people hear the word intimidation, they sometimes imagine psychopaths or manipulators. But that’s not what this is about. Intimidation has been used by some of the world’s greatest leaders — from Martin Luther King Jr. and Abraham Lincoln to the darker figures of history like Hitler, Stalin, and many others.

It’s a tool.

What matters is how and why it’s used.

Birmingham

Between April 3, 1963, and May 10, 1963, something historic unfolded in Birmingham.

A massive and peaceful protest campaign erupted in one of the most racially divided cities in the United States, led decisively by Martin Luther King Jr., alongside James Bevel, Fred Shuttlesworth, and other civil rights leaders.

In the early 1960s, the Black community in Birmingham faced systemic discrimination: economic exploitation, physical violence, and a legal system rigged against them. Initial actions began with a boycott of local businesses, aimed at forcing economic change and opening employment, education, and health opportunities for Black citizens. This boycott, led by Shuttlesworth, ultimately failed as the government resisted.

At that point, MLK stepped in to escalate the campaign. With the support of Wyatt Tee Walker and the SCLC, he helped organize “Project C” (for Confrontation)—a series of coordinated marches designed to provoke mass arrests and draw national attention to the injustice.

When adult volunteers were scarce, MLK relied on James Bevel to train students—high school, college, and even elementary students—in the principles of nonviolent protest. These young participants took to the streets under careful direction, creating a moral and political pressure the city government could not ignore. Through these actions, MLK forced the authorities into a crisis, highlighting the deep injustices of segregation and demonstrating the power of disciplined, nonviolent resistance.

Viewed from a strategic angle, Martin Luther King Jr.’s actions in Birmingham were a masterclass in nonviolent intimidation. His “opponent” was the government, and what he made them fear was not violence from him, but the threat of a larger civil crisis that could spiral out of control.

He demonstrated that he could unite the Black community, keep them disciplined under immense pressure, and inspire them to resist injustice without retaliation. By showing that protesters were unafraid of arrests, attacks, or imprisonment, MLK created a moral and political force the authorities could not ignore.

When the government saw him standing resolute, unshakable in the face of threats, they were forced to consider safer, more just solutions. The result was a measurable reduction in institutionalized racism and a shift toward negotiation rather than violent suppression.

“We know through painful experience that freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed.” Martin Luther King

This is a striking example of strategic intimidation—one that saved countless lives, minimized harm, and demonstrated the extraordinary power of disciplined, nonviolent leadership.

However, intimidation isn’t always as peaceful as we saw with MLK Jr. In most cases, it can be dangerous and harmful. I call this “passive aggression”, and often, it serves to prevent what I would call “active aggression.” For example, when you see a police officer in a movie pointing a gun at a suspect’s head, that’s passive aggression—they do it to prevent a shooting from happening, which would be an active aggression.

The goal of passive aggression is to inflict a small, controlled pressure or injury on an opponent, forcing them to move or submit before a greater harm occurs. People usually use passive aggression—or intimidation—to

protect themselves, their loved ones, or even strangers. Yet, unfortunately, it often backfires, causing extreme suffering and pain for everyone involved. An interesting example of this happened in the

Police officer

USA in April 2022. Patrick Lyoya was fatally shot by a police officer whose identity remains undisclosed.

The officer reportedly attempted to subdue Lyoya with a taser twice, both times missing. A physical struggle over the device ensued, captured on video, showing Lyoya and the officer grappling for control of the stun gun. The confrontation escalated when the officer drew his firearm, firing a shot that struck Lyoya in the back of the head while he was face-down and pinned—a lethal escalation.

The incident sparked widespread outrage and protests in Grand Rapids and beyond. It intensified national debates over police use of force and accountability, highlighting the dangers of escalation when non-lethal control methods fail.

Although it’s a deeply controversial and sensitive topic, the core of the incident lies in the fact that the police officer failed to intimidate Lyoya and instead resorted to direct confrontation. In Chapter Two, I’ll show how the situation could have unfolded very differently — if a proper method of intimidation had been used. Unlike this tragic case, the purpose of passive aggression is to prevent active violence.

Iran

If you are a world-leader or a president — and I imagine this book being read by politicians and business magnates — and you face an opponent stronger and more powerful than yourself, don't assume you're powerless. Don't resign yourself to being destroyed. Keep in mind that you can always intimidate your opponent, no matter how formidable they appear. Could you imagine Iran defeating both the United States of America and Israel at the same time? Probably not, right? Well — think again. They did, arguably.

They "won" without spilling blood or shedding tears. They avoided a full-scale war. They achieved their objective through powerful, strategic displays — not widespread destruction. In 2025, Israel attacked Iran, which subsequently drew the U.S. toward a potential conflict. What Iran did was very impressive because they struck U.S. military bases without harming anyone. Just a few precise strikes were enough to send a clear message: they could defend themselves, and any conflict would

not be an easy fight. Iran's intimidation strategy reportedly worked: it avoided inevitable destruction, safeguarded its citizens, soldiers, and allies.

"This will not be a mere demonstration of will or technological capability. This time, our response will be lethal."

- Iran official Twitter account 6/13/2025 4pm

Using passive aggression (or intimidation) shrewdly and strategically — without triggering full-scale violence — can be your greatest strength in a world of dangerous adversaries.

With great power comes great responsibility. You can use that power to make the world a better place, as Martin Luther King did, or you can use it to tear it down, as some leaders have done. It's a question of your ethics, not my methodology.

Never fight someone who is—or could be—afraid of you.

Summary

This session frames intimidation as a strategic tool rather than sheer violence. It begins with a personal experience of surviving a life-threatening situation, illustrating how fear can be manipulated to influence behavior without causing maximum harm. Intimidation is positioned as a form of power that conserves energy, prevents direct confrontation, and can achieve objectives more efficiently than brute force.

Historical and contemporary examples—from Martin Luther King Jr.'s disciplined nonviolent protests in Birmingham to the tragic case of Patrick Lyoya—show the spectrum of intimidation: when done strategically, it can protect and persuade; when misapplied, it can escalate violence and tragedy.

Iran's recent military strategy demonstrates how calculated shows of strength—without full-scale destruction—can achieve strategic goals and safeguard lives. Passive aggression, when applied wisely, forces opponents to act without triggering catastrophic conflict.

The central lesson: intimidation is a precise, controlled method to influence outcomes. Its ethical use can save lives and secure objectives, while

mismanagement can be disastrous. Never confront someone who fears you; let the threat guide their choices.

The Best Form of Power

What's the most effective form of power?

To answer this question, we need to define power. I see power as the ability to move people.

In his book *To Sell Is Human*, Daniel H. Pink defines "selling" as the ability to move people. He's not wrong, but I don't think this definition is fully accurate. It works for selling because selling uses a form of power—but power itself is broader.

There are four forms of power, and each one can be used for selling:

Seduction

Persuasion

Intimidation

Brute force

Now let's explore each form of power, from the least harmful to the most harmful, and then I'll answer the question asked at the beginning of this session.

Seduction

According to Robert Greene, seduction is a form of power created by women. But why? I'd say it developed as a way to avoid direct confrontation with men. In the same way we use intimidation—as I defined in Session 1—seduction is a less dangerous and far more pleasant form of power that lets us move people without hurting them.

The purpose of seduction as power is to create a fantasy world where your opponents love you, obsess over you, and want to do whatever pleases you.

This works because you bring something unusual, unexpected, or unpredictable that triggers their dopamine reward system and creates obsession. Here's how it works. I'll quote Robert Greene:

"The trick in seduction—male or female seduction—is when you're not there. The other person is thinking about you. That's when you succeed. Because when you're there, they're seeing you and things are going on, they're thinking about you. But when you're absent and they're still thinking about you, then you've gotten under their skin. If you're not there and they're not thinking about you, then your seduction isn't working. The whole point is to create a fantasy {…} creating mixed signals. People seem to be good, but they also show a bit of an evil side."

In that interview, he emphasized that the trick in seduction lies in creating curiosity—never letting them fully understand you. If you become boring or predictable, you lose your magic.

The problem with seduction is that we can run out of ideas and mysteries; we can accidentally wrong people, and they may turn against us. And as I said at the beginning of this book, this is for people with big stakes on the

table—so we can't rely too much on seduction. It's the weakest form of power, and it also requires the least effort.

This is why, throughout history, we see people start by seducing their opponents, and right before the seduction fades, they transform it into intimidation. The best example is Cleopatra and Julius Caesar.

Let me quickly tell you the story of how she used seduction—and then skillfully switched to intimidation—before her seductive power over Caesar could fade.

Egypt was unstable. Ptolemy XIII and Cleopatra—siblings and co-rulers—were locked in a vicious struggle for the throne. Alexandria was tense, divided, and on the edge of collapse. At the same time, Julius Caesar arrived in the city pursuing Pompey, only to discover that Pompey had already been murdered. Caesar, disgusted by the chaos, decided to stay in Egypt to restore order.

Cleopatra knew one thing:

If Caesar chose her brother, she'd lose everything—her crown, her legacy, and maybe her life.

She needed power, and the only way to move a man of Caesar's stature was through a form of influence more subtle than direct confrontation.

Caesar wasn't just any Roman general; he was the most powerful man in the Mediterranean.

Whoever he backed would automatically win the civil war in Egypt. Cleopatra had been forced out of Alexandria and was living under threat, her supporters scattered.

If Caesar sided with Ptolemy, she would be erased from history.

If Caesar sided with her, she would not only survive but rule the greatest kingdom of the East.

She needed Caesar on her side—but she couldn't approach him openly because Ptolemy's forces controlled the palace.

So she turned to seduction, the least dangerous form of power and the only one capable of moving a man without brute confrontation.

Cleopatra embodied the "unusual, unexpected, unpredictable" magic you described earlier—the fantasy, the mystery, the dopamine-triggering unpredictability.

She didn't walk in like a petitioner.

She entered Caesar's quarters rolled inside a carpet (or a linen sack) and was carried in as contraband.

When she emerged from the bundle, she wasn't just a queen—she was a story, an event, something no Roman general had ever seen.

That moment created exactly what seduction requires:

Curiosity — "Who is this woman who defies danger?"

Mystery — “If this is how she enters a room, what else is she capable of?”

A new fantasy — The exotic queen, bold yet graceful, intelligent enough to challenge him, fearless enough to approach him alone.

And the key trick of seduction happened:

When she wasn’t in the room, Caesar was thinking about her.

She represented something Rome didn’t: contradiction.

Soft but powerful, vulnerable but strategic, charming but calculating.

She displayed the “mixed signals” Robert Greene describes—beauty paired with a subtle edge of danger.

This was her magic.

And it worked.

Seduction gave her Caesar’s attention.

But attention alone wasn’t enough—she needed him to act.

So she transitioned to a more powerful form of influence: intimidation, but not by threatening Caesar directly.

She showed him a potential threat to his own interests if he didn’t support her.

She explained that:

Egypt was in chaos.

Ptolemy's advisers were manipulating him.

A weak Egypt at war with itself would destabilize Rome's grain supply.

Caesar's enemies in the Senate would use this chaos against him.

She painted a picture of a dangerous future—not for her, but for him.

Then she offered the solution:

"Support me. Restore me. With me, Egypt stays loyal to Rome. With me, your legacy in the East becomes unshakable."

That's the moment she moved him.

Not with her beauty but by showing him a threat and telling him exactly what to do to avoid it.

Cleopatra wasn't merely beautiful; she was dangerously intelligent.

Persuasion

Persuasion is the art of convincing people to move. It's a form of power that doesn't rely too much on love or attraction unlike seduction, and it doesn't require you to force people into action. You make them move on their own; you convince them that it's the best thing to do. Most people think persuasion is about arguing and throwing at others all the why's and how's of your position, but the greatest persuaders in history know that persuasion

isn’t a fight of arguments — it’s a dance of emotion and similarities. Persuasion might be the hardest way to move people, the most demanding form of power, yet it is the safest. It doesn’t depend on something too ephemeral, even though its foundations can sometimes vanish.

If we assume that intimidation uses fear as leverage, seduction uses desires, and brute force uses pain, then you can legitimately say that persuasion uses emotions. When I was writing this part, I hesitated a lot about what truly lies behind great persuasion. At first, I thought it was logic — and yes, sometimes it can be. However, I noticed that when you persuade someone with logic, it becomes easy for them to switch sides. If one of your enemies exposes flaws in your reasoning, your power weakens — and remember, in an international context, you can’t afford that mistake; it’s too expensive. I’ve seen governments make these kinds of errors throughout history, and believe me, it never led anywhere great for the persuader. The Nazis did this mistake and Italy switched sides during World War II; Sweden switched sides during the Great Northern War (1700–1721); the Haudenosaunee and many other countries and alliances followed the same pattern.

“Persuasion is achieved by the speaker’s personal character when the speech is so spoken as to make us think him credible.”

— Aristotle

Logic is a weak leverage; emotion is the strongest. Your persuasion should be rooted in emotions. Do you remember at the beginning of the book when the police officer pointed a gun at me and started counting down? Why didn’t I switch sides in front of such a huge threat? The answer is simple: my

emotions protected me. I had too much pride to become a traitor. I know you don't fully understand what happened that day, but I'll come back to it later and explain everything. Just keep in mind that a 14-year-old boy was ready to die for his conviction — and that's how you want your allies to be after you persuade them. In the face of fear, logic vanishes. You need to create an emotion stronger than fear to keep your allies loyal even when threatened.

A striking example of a leader who mastered persuasion through emotion rather than logic is Cleopatra.

After the assassination of Julius Caesar in 44 BCE, the Roman world was thrown into chaos. Mark Antony, one of Rome's most powerful leaders, was consolidating his power and preparing for the conflicts that would decide the fate of Rome. Cleopatra, the young Queen of Egypt, knew that her kingdom's survival depended on securing a powerful alliance. But Antony was distant, preoccupied with Roman politics, and could have easily seen Egypt as a mere client state, rather than a partner.

Cleopatra needed Antony not just as an ally but as a protector of her throne, someone who would see her as a partner rather than a subordinate. She needed him to believe in her personal and political worth, to commit himself emotionally to her and her kingdom, and to take decisive action in her favor. Logic and political arguments alone would never be enough — Antony was a Roman general, steeped in pragmatism and pride. Cleopatra had to touch something deeper: his emotions.

Cleopatra famously orchestrated her meeting with Antony in 41 BCE with extraordinary theatricality. She had herself transported to him in a rolled-up carpet, which was delivered directly to his quarters. When unrolled, she appeared before him in all her regality and charm. But it wasn't just her beauty that captivated Antony — it was the way she commanded the scene, mixing mystery, confidence, and intimacy. She spoke his language, flattered his ego, and created an aura of allure and majesty that made him feel as if the fate of the world was intertwined with her presence. Every gesture, every word, and every moment was designed to spark desire, admiration, and loyalty. Cleopatra didn't argue with Antony; she made him feel that supporting her was both natural and irresistible.

The plan worked brilliantly. Antony was enthralled — not only by Cleopatra's charisma but by the emotional bond she forged with him. He became deeply committed to her personally and politically, providing military support, protecting her throne, and cementing the Egyptian-Roman alliance. Cleopatra's success lay in her mastery of emotional persuasion: she didn't force Antony with threats or reasoned arguments; she made him want to act because of what he felt. It was a triumph of subtle power, and it forever marked her as one of history's most brilliant practitioners of emotional persuasion. Her ability to inspire loyalty and passion through emotion, rather than logic, remains a model for leaders across centuries.

"Cleopatra was a 'remarkably educated person'." — Duane W. Roller

Brute force

Brute force is the fastest form of power, yet the most energy-draining and harmful for both sides. It's the ability to move people purely through active aggression. In a brute-force attack, the enemy isn't trying to negotiate or convince you to move, unlike persuasion. He isn't trying to be loved like in seduction or feared like in intimidation. He's simply using pain to force you to move, and this is what separates brute force from every other form of power: it's not a psychological game, it's a direct attack. And unfortunately, when the stakes are too high, you can't allow yourself to waste time with mind games.

"There are only two forces in the world: the sword and the mind. In the long run, the sword will always be conquered by the mind."

- Napoleon Bonaparte (mis-attributed or at least unverified)

In a brute-force attack, the company with the largest budget, the government with the largest military, or the strongest fighter has better odds of winning — but that doesn't mean they always win. Just think about how Mark Zuckerberg, the creator of Facebook, failed to crush Snapchat even with more money and more users. By the way, Mark Zuckerberg is the perfect example of someone who has great weapons but consistently fails to crush his opponents. A winner is a winner, even with limited weapons — you just need to know how to use them. Unfortunately, this book isn't about brute force; it's about intimidation, so we won't dive deeper into how to win a battle against a giant. A perfect example of this, however, is Alexander the Great.

He and Cleopatra are my favorite historical figures, and I've studied them a lot. One of the clearest examples of pure, overwhelming force from Alexander the Great — without negotiation, intimidation, or psychological games — is the Battle of Issus (333 BCE).

After marching through Asia Minor, Alexander finally confronted what was considered an impossible threat: King Darius III of Persia, ruler of the largest empire on Earth at the time. Darius brought a massive army — far larger than Alexander's — and believed numbers alone would guarantee victory.

But Alexander wasn't in the mood for diplomacy.

He saw the narrow plain near the Pinarus River and instantly understood the terrain worked in his favor. Instead of relying on tricks, threats, or psychological warfare, he unleashed a direct, brutal, high-speed assault.

He personally took command of the Companion Cavalry on the right flank. When the battle began, he didn't hesitate — he charged straight at the Persian center, where Darius himself was positioned.

Meanwhile, the Macedonian phalanx advanced with terrifying discipline:

giant sarissa pikes locking together

shield walls moving like a single machine

step by step crushing every unit in front of them

The Persians had numbers, but they were packed too tightly in the narrow terrain and couldn't maneuver. Alexander exploited this mercilessly.

His cavalry smashed into the elite Persian guard with such overwhelming force that Darius panicked. His chariot turned and fled the battlefield. When the king ran, the entire Persian army collapsed.

Alexander didn't stop.

He pushed across the river, riding straight through the center where the Persian forces had completely shattered. The enemy was annihilated so decisively that Darius abandoned not just the battlefield, but also his:

mother

wife

daughters

massive treasury

It was one of the purest examples of raw military power deciding the fate of an empire.

"An army of sheep lead by a lion could defeat an army of lion lead by a sheep" — Alexander the Great

But what did he mean by that quote? He's essentially saying that if you're a great leader — a "lion" — with small weapons, "an army of sheep," you can defeat a weak leader — "a sheep" — even if he has great weapons, "an army of lions." So the true deciding factor isn't military strength or budget, but the ability to use your resources wisely. Maybe I'll have to write a book about brute force someday, because it's one of the most common elements in

international politics and high-stakes conflicts. It happens far more often than people think — for example, we saw Russia invading Ukraine because they perceived them as a potential threat, among many other cases.

If you don't remember, in this session we were trying to explore every form of power, compare them, and determine which one is the best. We've already examined intimidation, seduction, persuasion, and brute force; now it's time to compare them.

Which Is the Best Form of Power?

Which is the best form of power? I guess it's probably the one that allows us to move people very quickly without having to lose too much energy and resources, while keeping our power unshakable.

To answer that question, we have to examine three essential factors: speed, resources, and durability.

Speed — How fast can you get your opponent to act or move the way you want?

Resources — What must you sacrifice? What energy, tools, or "weapons" must you use to make them move?

Durability — Once you gain power over them, how long can you keep it?

These three factors are not equal. Some weigh far more than others.

The most important is speed. Time is everything. In dangerous or high-pressure situations, you want immediate action—not slow compliance.

The second most important is resources. You must put very little at risk. Never overexpose yourself. Use only what you can afford to lose.

Third comes durability—how long your influence lasts. Ideally, you maintain power for a long period, if not permanently.

With those priorities in mind, we can rate each form of power on a scale from 0 to 3 in each category.

Brute Force

Speed: 3/3 — The fastest form of power. When people face immediate harm, they move instantly.

Resources: 0/3 — Extremely costly. It drains energy, tools, and often harms you as much as your opponent.

Durability: 2/3 — Usually effective in the long term only if you destroy the opponent completely; otherwise the threat can return.

Seduction

Speed: 0/3 — A long game. It takes time and can fail easily.

Resources: 0/3 — Requires intense skill, attention, and emotional energy. You must constantly maintain the fantasy.

Durability: 1/3 — Influence depends on their perception of you. Once they notice your flaws, your power collapses.

Persuasion

Speed: 1/3 — Faster than seduction but slower than brute force. You must make them believe the idea is theirs.

Resources: 2/3 — One of the most resource-efficient forms of power.

Durability: 3/3 — The strongest long-term hold. When people think they chose the path, they rarely switch sides.

Intimidation

Speed: 2/3 — The second fastest method. And remember: speed matters more than anything.

Resources: 3/3 — The most resource-efficient. No need to charm, convince, or fight—just make the consequences clear.

Durability: 2/3 — Less stable than persuasion, but more durable than seduction and nearly as impactful as brute force with far fewer sacrifices.

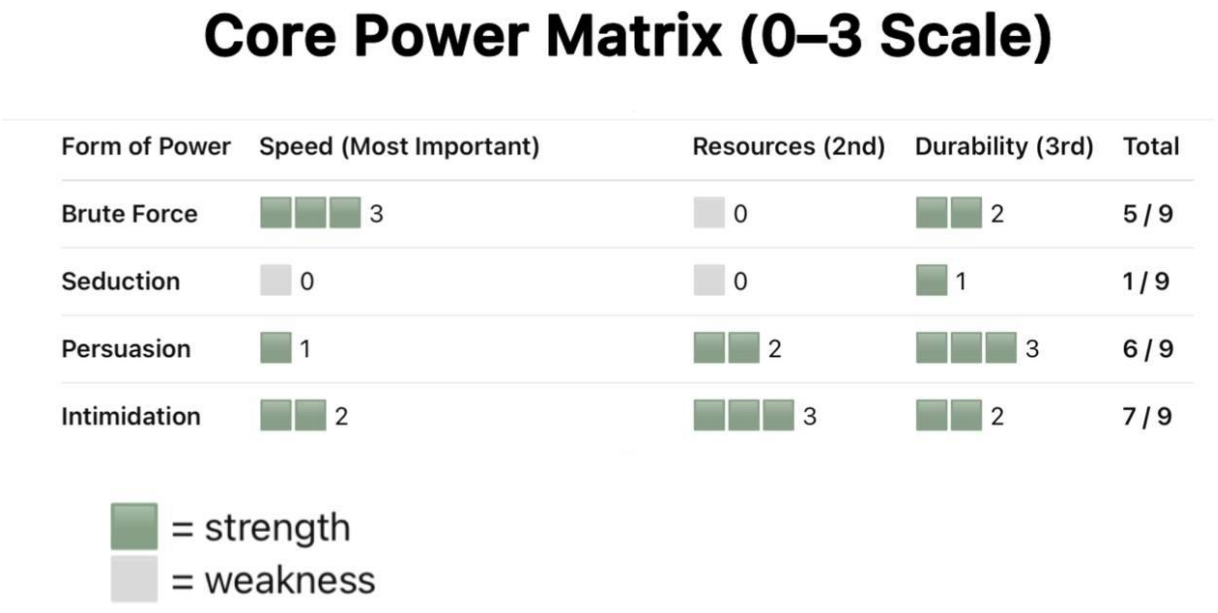

Figure 1 Core Power Matrix (0–3 Scale)

Weighted Power Efficiency Table

Let's weight the factors:

- **Speed ×3**
- **Resources ×2**
- **Durability ×1**

Form of Power	Speed (×3)	Resources (×2)	Durability (×1)	Weighted Score
Brute Force	3×3 = 9	0×2 = 0	2×1 = 2	**11**
Seduction	0×3 = 0	0×2 = 0	1×1 = 1	**1**
Persuasion	1×3 = 3	2×2 = 4	3×1 = 3	**10**
Intimidation	**2×3 = 6**	**3×2 = 6**	**2×1 = 2**	**14 (Highest)**

Figure 2 Weighted Power Efficiency Table

Overall, intimidation stands as the strongest form of power:

it moves people quickly, conserves your energy and resources, and lasts long enough to maintain control with minimal sacrifice.

According to Machiavelli it's better to be feared than to be loved if we can't be both.

And remember

Never fight someone who is—or could be—afraid of you.

Summary

This section examines the four forms of power—seduction, persuasion, intimidation, and brute force —and evaluates which is most effective in high-stakes situations. Power is defined as the ability to move people, and each form has distinct strengths and weaknesses:

Seduction: Creates desire and fascination, moving people subtly through curiosity and fantasy. Slow, resource-intensive, and fragile. Example: Cleopatra captivating Caesar.

Persuasion: Uses emotion and credibility to convince people to act on their own. Safer, more durable, but slower than intimidation. Example: Cleopatra emotionally binding Antony to her cause.

Intimidation: Leverages fear and perceived consequences to move people quickly with minimal resources. Fast, efficient, and reasonably durable. Ideal when speed and efficiency matter most.

Brute force: Immediate and often decisive, but resource-heavy, risky, and potentially destructive. Example: Alexander the Great at Issus.

Using three criteria—speed, resource efficiency, and durability—intimidation emerges as the most effective overall: it moves people quickly, conserves energy, and maintains control with minimal cost.

Key takeaway: intimidation is a strategic tool, not aggression for its own sake. Applied correctly, it allows you to move people decisively while preserving your position and safety.

Master or Be Mastered

Why should you study the dynamics of power and gain a deeper understanding of intimidation? There are countless reasons, but let me ask you this:

What is the main purpose of any species?

Evolution tells us that it's to survive and pass on our genes. Since the beginning of life, billions of species have existed, and over 99% (perhaps ≈ 99.9%) of all species that ever lived are now extinct. The biggest driver of extinction throughout Earth's history has been environmental change occurring faster than species could adapt. Humans have survived longer because we were able to adapt quickly to our surroundings.

Unfortunately, our environment has changed drastically over the last few thousand years—not just physically, but socially. Humans now live in complex hierarchies where resources, influence, and safety often depend on one's ability to navigate power dynamics. Those who understand intimidation, dominance, and persuasion can secure better opportunities, protect themselves, and ensure survival and success in ways that go beyond mere physical strength. Ignoring these dynamics leaves you vulnerable—socially, economically, and even psychologically—because others who master them naturally rise to the top.

Understanding power isn't about controlling others for the sake of it—it's about equipping yourself to survive, thrive, and influence the world around you in an environment that moves faster than ever before.

At the beginning of this book, I said it was for people in high-stakes business or sensitive situations. I admit, that was a bit exaggerated. It's mainly for them—no doubt—but it can still help a college student, a young employee, or a job applicant. You just have to be less brutal with it. Let me show you how this could help a regular individual with the following story.

Once, I was calling a law firm to sell appointment services—I connect lawyers with people ready to pay for legal help. Naturally, I always faced a gatekeeper. Remember in the last session I explained how you can use different forms of power—intimidation, seduction, brute force, persuasion—in sales? Well, I tried to do that unconsciously to get past the gatekeeper.

My first strategy went like this:

Ring, ring, ring…

"Allô? It's XYZ law firm, how can I help you?"

"Hello, my name is Djibril. How are you?"

"Mr. Djibril, how can I help you?"

"Euh… how's your day going?"

"Do you have any injuries?"

“No, no, no. I’m just checking on you. I’m fine.”

“You what?”

“Euhhh, I was calling to…”

Bip bip bip…

They hung up before I even got the chance to tell the gatekeeper I was trying to reach the managing partner. Which type of sales strategy did I use? My cold-calling script was terrible, yes, but focus on the type of power I tried to use.

Which form of power—your ability to move people—involves wasting time trying to make someone like you by asking meaningless questions like “Euh… how’s your day going?”? It’s a ridiculous attempt at seduction. You can’t seduce anyone in a 39-second call, and it was completely unnecessary. That’s why I failed. I called 83 law firms and didn’t last more than 60 seconds in any call.

Then I changed my strategy. I tried to persuade the gatekeeper that I was worthy of speaking to the managing partner. But I failed repeatedly because persuasion is often associated with scammers— they make bold claims, offer guarantees, swear by all gods… it just doesn’t work naturally. I was frustrated, even depressed, because I had spent so much effort refining my persuasion strategy to bypass gatekeepers.

Then one day, I went to university wearing a slightly funny suit with a tie, which boosted my confidence. I made a few cold calls, and—surprisingly—I skipped every gatekeeper. What had changed?

I started my persuasion script as usual:

Ring, ring, ring…

“Allô? It’s XYZ law firm, how can I help you?”

“Hey, it’s Djibril. I’m trying to reach the managing partner in your law firm. Could you connect me with them?”

“What is this regarding?”

“I just had a reminder to connect with them this week. You can just say it’s Djibril.”

“Are you an existing client?”

“It’s regarding a note we left a few days ago. This is just a quick follow-up.”
“Did you speak with an attorney before?”

At this point, I was frustrated. I held my tie, brushed off some dust from my suit, and said:

“I don’t have time for this. I’m about to leave the office, so go ahead and transfer me.”

Which form of power is this? Of course—it's intimidation. My overconfidence led me to accidentally use it to bypass the gatekeeper. To understand why this is intimidation, you need to know the gatekeeper's role:

Keep spam and cold callers away.

Let legitimate calls and business partners through.

The biggest problem for a gatekeeper is accidentally blocking a good call—it could get them in serious trouble. So when I said, "I don't have time for this. I'm about to leave the office, so go ahead and transfer me," the gatekeeper immediately assumed I was important. He feared putting himself in a bad situation. As I explained earlier, intimidation uses fear as fuel.

I leveraged his fear of blocking the right person to move him. You'll see in the next chapter exactly how intimidation works, but for now, just focus on this. If he had read this book, he would have recognized the intimidation attempt and probably wouldn't have let me through.

The same day, I was at the bank trying to renew my card. There were long lines, and I skipped them all. The gatekeeper tried to stop me, but I looked him straight in the eye, adjusted my jacket, and said calmly:

"Excuse me, I don't have time to wait. Please let me through."

He hesitated, clearly unsure if I was serious or just another impatient customer. I didn't flinch—I kept my posture confident, my voice steady. For a moment, he seemed to weigh the consequences of stopping me: making me

wait could create a scene, letting me through could make him look incompetent.

Imagine being in a strict company—you could be fired for a mistake simply because someone intimidated you. Imagine a football team losing because a player intimidated a teammate. Or a teacher being manipulated by a parent's intimidation.

Intimidation doesn't only happen in business, politics, or military operations. It's a real way to influence people, and it happens far more often than you think. Look at your landlord, your boss, or even your friends—you'll see countless examples.

"Power is not revealed by striking hard or often, but by striking true." —Honore de Balzac

The difference between political intimidation and individual actions lies in the consequences. A single failed act of intimidation almost led to a global disaster….

Edge of nuclear war

In October 1962, during the height of the Cuban Missile Crisis, the world teetered on the edge of nuclear war. A Soviet submarine, the B-59, was patrolling near Cuba, deep underwater and completely isolated from Moscow. Its crew was tense, exhausted, and unaware of the full scale of the escalating conflict above the surface. Suddenly, U.S. Navy ships detected the submarine and began dropping small depth charges—not to destroy it, but to signal it to surface.

For the B-59 crew, the noise of the explosions felt like an attack. Cut off from communications, they had no way of knowing whether war had already begun. Inside the submarine, the atmosphere shifted dramatically: fear, confusion, and uncertainty gripped every officer. The orders were clear— the submarine was armed with a nuclear torpedo—but the decision to launch required unanimous agreement from the top commanders on board.

The U.S. Navy's depth charges were intended as a signal, but for the crew of B-59, they were an intimidating force. The sudden, relentless pressure created a sense of urgency, panic, and fear. They could interpret it as an act of aggression, potentially justifying a nuclear response.

This is a perfect example of how intimidation works: The U.S. Navy's small, calculated action unintentionally applied psychological pressure that could have led to catastrophic consequences. The crew debated launching the nuclear torpedo. Had they acted on fear and misperception, a single misjudgment could have triggered a nuclear war between the superpowers. Understanding intimidation—and how fear can drive people to extreme decisions—is critical because, in situations like this, the consequences are not theoretical—they are global.

As tensions inside the submarine reached a breaking point, the decision rested on one man: Vasili Arkhipov, the flotilla commander on board. While other officers were ready to launch, Arkhipov refused to authorize it. His calm, rational assessment cut through the fear and confusion. He insisted that they surface and await orders from Moscow before taking any irreversible action.

Thanks to Arkhipov's refusal, the submarine surfaced, the immediate threat of nuclear escalation ended, and the crisis eventually deescalated. A single act of restraint prevented a catastrophe that could have engulfed the world.

This incident demonstrates the deadly potential of intimidation when applied without

understanding. Small acts meant to pressure or coerce can spiral into global consequences if fear is allowed to dictate action. And just as Arkhipov's calm prevented disaster, mastering the dynamics of intimidation is crucial—not for manipulation, but to survive and make rational decisions in highstakes situations.

This is why you should study the dynamics of power—to understand how to intimidate effectively and avoid being manipulated.

Never fight someone who is—or could be—afraid of you.

Summary

This section emphasizes the necessity of mastering power, influence, and intimidation to survive and thrive in high-stakes environments. Evolution favors adaptability; in modern human hierarchies, understanding power dynamics can determine access to resources, opportunities, and safety. Ignoring them leaves you vulnerable to those who do.

Through practical examples—from cold-calling gatekeepers to navigating bureaucracies— intimidation emerges as a subtle yet powerful tool. It works by exploiting fear, uncertainty, and perceived consequences, often without

the need for physical force. Confidence, posture, tone, and timing convert presence into influence.

History shows the stakes can be extreme. The Cuban Missile Crisis illustrates how misapplied intimidation can escalate fear to catastrophic levels. Vasili Arkhipov's calm restraint prevented global disaster, underscoring the dual responsibility of understanding intimidation: to apply it effectively and to avoid being manipulated.

The core principle: mastery of intimidation is not about cruelty—it's about survival, strategy, and the wisdom to act decisively while controlling risk. Never confront someone who fears you; let the threat guide the outcome without unnecessary escalation.

Keep in mind

Intimidation is strategy, not violence. Fear can be manipulated to influence behavior without causing maximum harm. Life shows that controlled intimidation conserves energy, prevents direct confrontation, and achieves objectives more efficiently than brute force.

Historical lessons reveal the spectrum of intimidation. From Martin Luther King Jr.'s disciplined nonviolent protests to Patrick Lyoya's tragedy, intimidation can protect, persuade, or escalate conflict depending on its application. Calculated shows of strength, like Iran's recent military strategies, achieve goals without unnecessary destruction. Passive aggression guides action while preserving life.

Master intimidation as a precise tool. Never humiliate. Never corner. Use threat to shape choices, not force outcomes. Ethical and controlled application saves lives, maintains advantage, and secures objectives.

Power has four forms: seduction, persuasion, intimidation, and brute force. Each moves people differently:

Seduction: Creates desire, subtle and slow. Example: Cleopatra and Caesar.

Persuasion: Leverages emotion and credibility; durable but gradual. Example: Cleopatra binding Antony emotionally.

Intimidation: Uses fear to move people quickly, efficiently, and reliably. Ideal for high-stakes situations.

Brute force: Immediate and decisive, but costly and risky. Example: Alexander the Great at Issus.

Efficiency, speed, and control make intimidation supreme. It moves people decisively, conserves resources, and maintains authority with minimal cost.

Mastery is survival. Adaptability and understanding power dynamics determine access to resources, safety, and influence. Confidence, posture, tone, and timing convert presence into control.

Misapplied intimidation, as in the Cuban Missile Crisis, can escalate risk catastrophically—restraint is as vital as action.

The ultimate rule: Never confront someone who fears you. Let perception, fear, and strategic pressure guide outcomes. Survival and dominance belong to those who wield intimidation with precision, clarity, and wisdom.

Chapter 2- The Strategies of War

The Anatomy of a Threat

Boom!

Imagine this: it's 10 p.m., you're 11 years old, and you've just fallen asleep. Suddenly, a loud explosion shakes the night. Your parents rush into your room and tell you it's only fireworks. You believe them—but deep inside, your body still tightens. You still feel that cold tension in your chest, that uncomfortable alertness you can't turn off.

Exactly.

Now imagine that same moment happening every single night, except your parents aren't saying it's fireworks—they're telling you the truth: they're gunshots, and you must stay away from the windows.

If an 11-year-old would panic at the sound of fireworks, what would you do in my situation?

"*Boom…"*

"boom… boom…"

No breaks.

Every night.

2018, North-West Cameroon.

I lived in a conflict zone where mornings felt like a lottery. On the way to school, I hoped not to see blood or bodies on the ground. At the time—and still now, although less intensely—a violent struggle was unfolding between groups who wanted to divide the country into an English-speaking and a French-speaking side.

The political story is complex.

Figure 3 northwest Cameroon

The consequences were simple: danger everywhere.

On the road to school, a military helicopter hovered right above us with a mounted weapon. They claimed it was for our protection, but all I felt was the pressure of being targeted, the sense that a single mistake could end everything.

We eventually fled our neighborhood and moved close to a travel agency, ready to escape the city at any moment. I lived through ten months of that environment, and it sparked my curiosity about something I had never fully understood before:

That strange internal signal.

That cold rush in the body.

The tightening chest. The fast heartbeats.

The unmistakable feeling of threat.

A threat is anything—real or imagined—that signals potential harm, loss, or danger.

It doesn’t even need to hurt you.

It only needs to suggest that it could.

Threat, fear, and intimidation form a simple relationship:

Threat → the suggestion of potential harm

Fear → the emotional response to that suggestion

Intimidation → the strategic use of threat to influence behavior

Importantly:

A threat does not always mean someone is trying to intimidate you. But intimidation always requires a threat.

Examples of Threat Without Intimidation

A muscular stranger walks into the room. You feel unsafe. He isn't intimidating you, but your brain perceives threat.

A competitor enters your market. They don't even know you exist, but they threaten your position. – A new regulation, new technology, or new environmental shift can also signal danger.

A threat is simply anything your brain interprets as something capable of taking something from you —your safety, your money, your status, your life.

You must know the difference between a threat and intimidation because the two concepts guide different strategies. A threat becomes intimidation only when someone is deliberately trying to influence your actions.

Many people confuse the two and respond emotionally instead of strategically. But the moment you understand this distinction, you gain an advantage:

You learn to recognize what is simply a threat…

and what is someone trying to move you like a chess piece.

Facebook

Whether people love him or hate him, Mark Zuckerberg is one of the most effective threat-detectors in modern business. With a net worth around $228B at the time I write this, he built Meta by understanding threats before they become catastrophes.

In Facebook's early years, the company had almost no competition. But as time passed, new platforms started stealing pieces of the same limited resource Facebook depends on:

Human attention.

Every person has only 24 hours per day.

You cannot expand that number.

Attention is finite—and every second spent on another app is a second lost to Facebook.

So when Snapchat emerged around 2011–2012—with its disappearing messages, spontaneity, and younger demographic appeal—it directly threatened Facebook's dominance.

Facebook was dominant and didn't see ephemeral-messaging apps as a serious risk. But when Snapchat launched (around 2011–2012) — offering temporarily disappearing photos/videos instead of permanent posts — it began resonating strongly with younger users.

Snapchat's growing popularity among teens and young people posed a new model: less permanence, more privacy, more spontaneity — a sharp contrast

with Facebook's permanent, feedbased social graph. Sensing a threat, Facebook reacted quickly: in December 2012 it launched its first Snapchat-like app, Poke — a standalone app allowing users to send expiring photos/videos.

But Poke failed to gain traction and was quietly shut down — a turning point showing Facebook underestimated how strongly Snapchat's model would resonate. Then in 2013, Facebook made an aggressive move: it offered to buy Snapchat for about USD 3 billion. Snapchat's leadership declined. Once acquisition failed, Facebook switched tactics: instead of buying, it decided to clone. As explained in a detailed analysis, Facebook apparently adopted an internal motto along the lines of: "Don't be too proud to copy."

In 2014, Facebook released another attempt: Slingshot — a more fleshed-out ephemeral-messaging app. Later, Facebook rolled disappearing-message and "Stories"-style features into its main social apps. By mid-2016 and early 2017, Facebook integrated "Stories" (photos/videos that disappear after 24 h, with filters, stickers, etc.) into its ecosystem. In 2017 and the years after, the copycat strategy became painfully effective. For many users — especially casual ones — Snapchat's uniqueness faded because the same "ephemeral + filters + stories" features existed on Facebook's more popular platforms. This undermined Snapchat's competitive edge.

Snapchat never tried to intimidate Facebook—but its existence was a threat.

Mark did what great players do: he detected the threat early and acted immediately.

Threat recognition is the first step toward survival, dominance, or expansion. Facebook vs. Snapchat reminds me of a story in the Qur'an, Bible, and Torah.

Goliath

Goliath stood as the undefeated giant of the battlefield—armored, confident, feared by every army around him. For years, no warrior had even dared to challenge him. His size alone dictated the outcome of every encounter.

But then something shifted: instead of sending another trained soldier, Israel sent a young shepherd with no armor, no reputation, no army behind him—only a sling and a refusal to fear the impossible.

To Goliath, this wasn't a challenger. It was an insult.

Yet this "insignificant" opponent represented a new kind of threat: one that didn't play by the traditional rules of combat.

Goliath laughed at David.

He saw no armor → so he assumed weakness.

He saw no sword → so he assumed defeat.

He saw youth → so he assumed ignorance.

Goliath believed only giants could fight giants.

He never imagined agility, precision, speed, and unconventional tactics could beat brute strength.

While Goliath advanced slowly with heavy gear, David moved light and fast.

One perfectly aimed stone—something Goliath never prepared for—struck the only vulnerable point in his entire armor.

The giant fell not because he was weak, but because he dismissed the possibility that strength could take another form.

Goliath's fall reshaped the battlefield.

The giant who dominated by size was defeated by someone who dominated by strategy. David's victory proved a universal truth:

A small opponent is never small if you ignore them long enough.

What's the general purpose of threatening? It's to create fear and push people to move. The goal is to plant fear in your opponent's mind—to make them want to back away from you and avoid any form of conflict.

As I said before, fear is simply a response to the suggestion of harm. That harm can be physical, financial, or psychological, and it doesn't even need to be real; it only needs to exist in the opponent's imagination.

Uncertainty

This is consistent with the 2012 study by Hirsh et al., which showed that uncertainty intensifies fear responses. When people don't know what might happen, their minds automatically amplify possible threats. Even small or ambiguous signals can trigger stronger fear simply because the brain hates uncertainty more than it hates danger itself.

The 2012 model proposed by Hirsh and his colleagues helps explain why uncertainty itself can feel like a threat. Their idea is simple but powerful: when the mind cannot predict what will happen next, it enters a state of internal disorder—what they call psychological entropy. This sense of internal chaos is uncomfortable and automatically interpreted as danger, even if no visible enemy or explicit threat is present. The brain evolved to survive by anticipating outcomes, so anything that disrupts predictability triggers a defensive reaction.

In their framework, uncertainty creates conflict between different possible interpretations of the environment and different actions you might take. The mind tries to evaluate multiple scenarios at once—fight, flee, hide, wait, ignore—and that internal conflict produces tension. To escape this tension, the brain searches for something stable: a belief, a pattern, a rule, or even an illusion of control. When clarity is absent, fear rises to push the person into action.

This explains why ambiguous situations often feel more frightening than clearly dangerous ones. The mind would rather face a known threat than navigate an unpredictable one. In uncertainty, the imagination fills the gaps with the worst possibilities, amplifying fear beyond the objective risk. Even without real danger, uncertainty alone can activate the same emotional and physiological responses as actual threat.

This model aligns perfectly with the lived experience of fear in chaotic environments. In a war zone, unpredictability becomes its own enemy.

Prospect Theory

Prospect Theory explains that humans don’t evaluate situations logically.

We evaluate them relative to gains and losses, driven by emotion, perception, and instinct— especially under threat.

Loss Aversion

Losses feel about twice as painful as gains feel good.

That’s why threats trigger such intense responses: your brain exaggerates potential losses.

In a war zone, the threat of death feels infinitely larger than the chance of survival—even when the actual probability shifts.

In business, Zuckerberg didn’t fear Snapchat as a competitor— he feared the loss of attention, dominance, and market share.

Risk Attitudes Shift Under Threat

When facing gains, humans avoid risk.

When facing losses, humans actively seek risk.

This explains:

why people take desperate actions when they feel cornered

why leaders act aggressively when they feel threatened

why companies react violently when their dominance is challenged

Threat pushes the mind into the loss domain, where decisions become more extreme.

Probability Distortion

Under threat, we overestimate small dangers and underestimate big ones.

That's why gunfire at night feels like "death is next door," even if statistically you might survive… and why CEO's panic over emerging competitors even before those competitors reach significant size.

The Value Curve Mirrors Human Fear

Kahneman's value function shows that losses create a steep psychological impact.

This is the internal mechanism behind intimidation itself.

A threat doesn't need to be real. It only needs to be felt.

From a war zone at age 11 to the battlefield of global business, the psychology behind threat is universal. Understanding threat is not just about surviving danger—it's about navigating power, strategy, and human behavior at the highest levels.

Threat is not always about violence. In fact, the most effective threats often require no physical attack at all. They work by creating a clear sense of potential consequences in the mind of the opponent—by shaping perception and anticipation. This is exactly what Mahatma Gandhi demonstrated during the Salt March in 1930.

Gandhi

Gandhi did not pick up a weapon or physically confront the British colonial authorities. Instead, he led thousands of people on a 240-mile march to the Arabian Sea to produce salt in direct violation of British laws. On the surface, it was a peaceful act. But beneath that calm lay a subtle yet powerful threat: the possibility of widespread civil unrest, disruption, and loss of control for the British administration. By making the authorities aware of the potential consequences of ignoring the movement, Gandhi forced them to reconsider their options.

The logic is simple. Fear does not always require immediate danger; it can arise from the possibility of disruption, loss, or social upheaval. Gandhi leveraged this understanding masterfully. The British did not attack the marchers violently because the threat of global condemnation, escalating resistance, and political instability was real. They negotiated rather than risk a confrontation that could spiral beyond their control.

The measure of a man's power is the fear he inspires in others—and the wisdom to use it sparingly.

In essence, Gandhi's strategy illustrates the power of perceived threat over actual harm. By creating fear of potential consequences, he moved an opponent without a single act of aggression. This aligns with everything we've seen about threat, fear, and uncertainty: it is not force that compels movement—it is the mind's anticipation of risk, loss, and disorder.

When threatening someone, you don't want them to know that they're being threatened; you just want to suggest enough so they can picture what's going

to happen if they don't move. You can't just go ahead and say, "Hey bro, my punch hurts really bad, please don't fight with me or I'll hurt you," because that sounds weak and fake. Unfortunately, they'll know that you're trying to avoid and save your life. geopolitics

In geopolitics it's not about pretending to be more powerful, you can't just say to your opponent

that you're going to win the war. In most cases it's about reminding them what they've to lose, as we've seen before people are very sensitive to risk and they've loss aversion. Let's say ABC is about to invade DEF, just a fictional story for educational purposes, the best move DEF can pull is not to push ABC towards the fight but to manage to avoid it by showing to ABC what they've to lose.

Make them reevaluate their risk

Show them that if they attack DEF, they're going to face economic sanctions and could be banned from international markets. They'll lose endorsement from international organizations, and DEF is going to be supported by the GHI, so ABC is going to have serious repercussions and military losses.

The best thing is to identify their biggest fear and use it as consequences.

Notice that I didn't say "tell them", I said "show them". Let them assume it by themselves through strategic meetings with the GHI government, international organizations, and NATO. Telling is publicly assuming that you're weak.

Create mystery

Create multiple possible scenarios and leave them in uncertainty. Don't let them know all of your allies or all the restrictions they're going to subit. Create small information leaks and propaganda about a nuclear agreement to let them assume the worst.

Don't hesitate to use lies carefully — the goal is to survive; morality is a luxury affordable by winner.

Let them use their imagination and never let them know from which side you're going to hit.

Create an open negotiation

Let them negotiate — a very fair negotiation that doesn't ruin their honor. We'll come back to this later; it's very deep.

If you need to project dominance, you can shift your body language toward a controlled, imposing presence. This involves using signals that communicate firmness, self-possession, and the possibility of confrontation without saying a word.

Strategic Signals of Intimidating Presence

Posture & Territory

Hold your frame tall and solid. Square your shoulders, keep your back straight, and position your feet wider than usual to claim ground. Expand subtly — leaning against a surface, planting one hand on a table, or standing with

relaxed breadth — all of this tells others you're not yielding space. 2. Eye Contact

Use a steady, unbroken gaze. Don't blink rapidly or look away first. This isn't about rage; it's about unwavering attention that pressures the other person to react first.

Facial Control

Keep your expression flat or stern. No nervous smiles. A locked jaw, still features, and a calm, unreadable face often communicate more threat than overt aggression.

Gestures & Movement

Limit your movements. When you do act, move slowly and intentionally — crossing your arms high, planting your hands on your hips, pointing a finger only when making a decisive statement. Stillness is often more intimidating than motion.

Proximity

Step slightly closer than normal or position yourself where someone has to move around you. Standing in a doorway or narrowing someone's exit path subtly asserts dominance without physical contact.

Voice

Speak low, steady, and unhurried. Not loud — controlled. The kind of tone fighters use before they even touch gloves.

Strategic Withdrawal

A key part of projecting dominance is knowing when not to engage. If your read of the situation tells you you're outmatched or the conflict is about to escalate physically, the smartest move is to disengage immediately. Intimidation is a tool to prevent confrontation, not provoke it. Recognizing danger early and stepping away isn't weakness — it's tactical awareness. Survival and control always come before ego. If you're not weaker than your opponent, you can switch to brute force as a final resort.

The measure of a man's power is the fear he inspires in others—and the wisdom to use it sparingly.

Summary

In this section, I dissect the anatomy of threat and the psychology of fear. Threats do not need to be real; they only need to be perceived. Fear arises not from the certainty of harm, but from the possibility, amplified by uncertainty and loss aversion. Understanding this distinction allows a person to navigate danger strategically rather than react emotionally. Awareness of threat transforms survival into control.

Intimidation is the deliberate use of threat to influence behavior. Its effectiveness relies on subtlety, perception, and uncertainty. History and business show that small or unconventional actors can topple giants by exploiting this principle: David versus Goliath, Gandhi against the British, and Zuckerberg reacting to emerging competitors. The key is to make the opponent reassess risk, manage unknowns, and anticipate consequences without direct confrontation.

In my personal framework, projecting dominance is about controlled signals, not brute force. Posture, gaze, expression, voice, and positioning communicate threat silently. Timing, restraint, and the ability to withdraw are as vital as aggression. Power is measured by the fear you inspire—and by the discipline to use it strategically, not recklessly.

The Golden Rules

I broke my hand in a fight.

In my everyday life, I'm usually a very calm and chill person. I don't like unnecessary violence, yet I ended up in a fight with a guy eight years older than me when I was in high school.

December 2022, West Cameroon.

We had a school project in our French class where we had to write a long essay on a complex subject. Age gaps between students weren't uncommon at our school; differences of five to ten years happened frequently. The French teacher chose me to be the group leader because I was the youngest.

When we started working on the essay, everyone else left, so I had to work with just a few students. We worked very hard and collected funds from all participants. After fundraising, our work was ready—but then…

One student asked for a refund. I suggested he speak to the teacher because we didn't have any money left and couldn't give him a refund. He was probably around five years older than me, and a good friend of my big brother, someone I respected a lot.

He kept insisting on a refund. I said something like, "No, I can't now. Maybe we'll see later." He then raised his voice, making intimidating and aggressive

moves. (I have a video of the fight—I'll include a link or QR code in Chapter 3 for analysis.) Some girls pulled out their phones and started filming.

He was someone I respected—but I couldn't let him get away with it. I knew that if I did, I'd be bullied for the rest of the school year. So, I punched him multiple times. His friend came and pushed me away, and when I fell, he stood up to punch me—but people stopped the fight. You'll see it in the video.

Humiliation

Why did I start a fight with someone older and stronger than me? I reacted to public humiliation. Most people don't realize this, but public humiliation feels like physical harm to the brain. I didn't attack first—he did. He struck my dignity, and I struck back at his face.

It's ironic: he tried to intimidate me and get a refund but ended up injured. We both got expelled, and he didn't get any refund. As for me, I transferred to a different school and passed my exams— everything turned out fine. (I did get expelled from that second school at the end of the year, but all fine.)

The point: he failed to intimidate me, provoked me, and ended up in direct confrontation—all because he humiliated me instead of inspiring fear.

Versailles

Between January 18, 1919, and June 28, 1919, a decisive sequence of events unfolded in Versailles.

Following the end of the First World War, representatives of the victorious Allied powers convened to define the postwar order. Germany, having been defeated, was excluded from the negotiations and later presented with a finalized treaty to accept. The agreement restructured borders, limited military capacity, imposed reparations, and required formal acknowledgment of responsibility for the conflict.

At the time, Germany was experiencing internal instability: economic strain, political fragmentation, and social disorientation following imperial collapse. The treaty did not merely constrain material capabilities; it formalized defeat in a public and symbolic manner. The loss of territory, the restriction of sovereignty, and the imposed narrative of culpability were integrated into the legal framework governing the postwar state.

Compliance was achieved, but the conditions did not dissolve opposition. Over time, the treaty became a central reference point in domestic political discourse. It functioned as a shared psychological marker—an externally imposed settlement that framed national identity around loss, resentment, and deferred confrontation.

Viewed from a strategic angle, the Treaty of Versailles illustrates the limits of enforced submission through humiliation. The opposing side was formally disarmed and constrained, yet internally mobilized. The absence of a dignified resolution removed incentives for acceptance and replaced them with long-term antagonism. Rather than closing the conflict, the settlement preserved it in latent form, allowing it to reemerge once circumstances permitted.

The golden rule: never humiliate your opponent. Never make fun of them for being intimidated. Public humiliation is more powerful than fear—it's why some people are driven to suicide due to bullying or harassment. I do not tell you to spare their dignity out of kindness. I tell you to spare it because a humiliated enemy fights to the death. A graceful exit makes them weak; humiliation makes them desperate.

The best move that guy from my 11th grade class could have made was to turn around, ask everyone to stop filming and laughing, or just walk away with a calm, "We'll solve this later," then speak to me in private. I likely would have handled it without conflict.

By avoiding humiliation, you protect yourself from unnecessary, desperate attacks.

Survival mode

Do you remember the tragedy in the USA in April 2022 with Patrick Lyoya and a police officer? (We discussed this in Chapter 1.) If Lyoya tried to grab the taser, it wasn't entirely his fault—the officer triggered his survival instincts. Lyoya reacted instinctively. The human brain is wired to survive, as I explained in Chapter 1, Session 3.

Here are two studies explaining why someone might attack a police officer when in imminent danger:

Joseph LeDoux studied neural circuits of fear and discovered that the amygdala—the brain's fear center—can trigger rapid, unconscious responses to threats before the conscious mind fully processes the situation. This

“shortcut” allows humans to act reflexively to survive, sometimes bypassing rational thought entirely. In life-threatening situations, this can result in extreme, unpredictable actions—the brain doing “whatever it takes” to stay alive. LeDoux’s work explains why people lash out or make seemingly irrational choices under immediate threat.

Robert Sapolsky studied how stress affects the brain and body. He found that dangerous situations trigger intense stress responses, releasing adrenaline and cortisol to prepare the body for immediate action through the fight-or-flight response. This enhances strength, speed, and alertness but often bypasses careful reasoning. Essentially, the brain prioritizes immediate survival over long-term consequences, explaining why someone might grab a weapon or act aggressively—even toward a police officer—in a reflexive attempt to protect themselves.

The second golden rule: never push your opponent into survival mode. Give them a way out. Do not trap them, and never leave them with no choice but to fight. When I am physically attacked, my body reacts automatically—without thinking. The police officer shouldn’t have cornered Lyoya and attacked him with a taser. That was a fundamental mistake in intimidation.

Public Execution

Sometimes intimidation fails, and you end up in a situation where you have to use brute force. I’ve talked about this before, and I’ll say it again: brute force consumes too much energy. So if you have to use it, do it in a way that ensures you’ll never have to do it again. Then, use that display of brute force as a story to intimidate future enemies.

Do not execute your opponent in private. If you know you can win, carry out a public execution in front of everyone. Make it a pure demonstration of brutality and strength—something that makes people feel unsafe, makes their bodies shake, and puts fear in their chest.

Golgotha

In the early decades of the first century, Roman authority in Judea faced persistent instability. The region was marked by religious tension, messianic expectations, and periodic resistance to imperial control. Roman governance relied less on cultural integration and more on deterrence—order was maintained through visible power rather than negotiated legitimacy.

Jesus of Nazareth emerged within this context as a public figure whose influence grew through teaching, symbolic actions, and a following that crossed social boundaries. Although he did not command an army, his presence intersected with political sensitivities. Claims associated with kingship, however ambiguous, carried implications the Roman system could not ignore. Local authorities escalated the matter to Roman jurisdiction, reframing a religious disturbance as a question of political stability.

The method of execution was not incidental. Crucifixion was a Roman instrument designed for visibility and duration. It was reserved for rebels, slaves, and those whose deaths were meant to be instructional rather than discreet. By placing the execution outside the city and in full public view, Roman authority transformed the event into a demonstration. The body, the

posture, and the spectacle communicated a single message: challenges to imperial order would be neutralized publicly and decisively.

The execution achieved immediate compliance. No uprising followed, and the movement appeared, temporarily, to be extinguished. The act functioned as intended within Roman logic—fear was produced, and control was reaffirmed. Power was displayed. Be cautious with public executions—do not create a martyr. Jesus' public execution was intended to intimidate, but it ultimately created a martyr, leading people to revolt rather than submit. This illustrates an important risk associated with brute force.

However, we will avoid going too deeply into the topic of brute force and remain focused on intimidation. Brute force deserves a book of its own.

Rebellion

In 334 BCE, following his initial campaigns in Asia Minor, Alexander the Great faced one of the first significant challenges to his authority. While he had rapidly conquered territories, control was fragile: newly subjugated cities and local rulers were testing the limits of his power. Dissent had to be addressed decisively to prevent the appearance of weakness that could cascade across the empire.

The rebellion, led by a city-state that resisted Macedonian occupation, was met with a calculated response. Alexander ordered the captured leaders to be executed in public, in the central square of the city. Soldiers, citizens, and envoys from neighboring regions witnessed the act. The execution was not merely a punitive measure—it was a deliberate display of absolute authority. By making the act visible to all, Alexander transformed the punishment into a

spectacle of deterrence, demonstrating that resistance to his rule would be met with immediate and uncompromising consequences.

The psychological impact was profound. Word of the public execution spread quickly through surrounding territories. Local rulers and conquered populations, who might have contemplated rebellion, observed the cost of defiance. Fear became a tool, binding obedience to his reputation.

The golden rule: Turn your enemy's execution into a massive spectacle, where the crowd remains silent, afraid of being next on the list. However, it is better to use public execution by brute force on an enemy who is significantly weaker than you, so you avoid appearing as a public loser. If they are weaker than you and still not afraid of you, you should not hesitate to execute them publicly.

Reduce friction

Remove everything that separates your opponent's position to where you want them to be, make it easier for them to move. You want to use intimidation to force them to move but sometime they just can't because there's something on the path, what you can do is to make them aggress the issue and try to solve it together. Yes, I said try to solve it together, the ultimate goal of intimidation is to get them to move without confrontation so why aren't you okay with helping your victims to move? If you're a world leader dictator and want to invade a country or remove its population, if they've no else to go they're going to fight to die. You don't want them to revolt, you want them to just quit in silence so you could negotiate a territory for them. Adolf Hitler is a very great example of someone who understood how to reduce friction. Strategy has no moral compass. The same friction

reduction techniques used by peacemakers were weaponized by dangerous regimes in history.

Adolf Hitler

When Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party came to power in 1933, one of their central goals was to reshape German society according to their ideology. A major part of this program was the exclusion of Jews from public, economic, and social life. Before the regime moved toward violent escalation years later, its early strategy centered on forcing Jews to emigrate.

Immediately after taking power, the government introduced many measures meant to push Jews to leave Germany voluntarily. These included boycotts, professional restrictions, dismissal from civil service positions, and new laws that limited economic participation.

Despite these pressures, emigration was complicated.

Many countries had strict immigration quotas.

German Jews risked losing most of their wealth if they left, due to currency restrictions and export regulations.

Jewish organizations both inside and outside Germany were trying to protect community members while also negotiating possibilities for relocation.

This created a situation where both the Nazi government and some Jewish organizations explored arrangements that would facilitate emigration, each for different reasons.

The Haavara (Transfer) Agreement (1933)

Shortly after Hitler took power, Jewish leaders in Mandatory Palestine and the German Zionist Federation proposed a mechanism that would allow German Jews to emigrate to Palestine with a portion of their assets intact.

How the Agreement Worked

The arrangement allowed the following process:

A Jewish emigrant in Germany deposited money into a special account in a German bank.

The funds were used inside Germany to purchase German goods.

The goods were exported to Palestine.

Once sold in Palestine, the proceeds were returned to the emigrant in local currency. This system partially bypassed Germany's restrictions on exporting capital abroad.

For the Nazi government, the agreement encouraged Jewish emigration and supported German exports.

For Zionist organizations, it made relocation financially possible for many families who would otherwise face ruin.

The agreement lasted until the outbreak of World War II. Through it, roughly 50,000 German Jews managed to relocate to Palestine with a fraction of their assets preserved.

Other Negotiations for Emigration

The Haavara Agreement was the most structured arrangement, but it wasn't the only one.

In 1938, the Evian Conference brought together representatives from many countries to discuss the rising number of refugees. Despite widespread acknowledgment of the crisis, most nations declined to significantly increase immigration quotas. This limited the practical options available for largescale resettlement.

Various Jewish organizations, governments, and intermediaries tried numerous strategies to expand pathways for emigration:

Negotiations with Latin American and European countries to accept Jewish refugees.

Efforts by Jewish aid groups to secure visas or raise funds.

Talks with Nazi officials on specific categories of emigration—youth programs, agricultural training programs, skilled workers, etc.

None of these efforts ever scaled to meet the number of Jews the Nazi regime intended to push out, but It's all great example of friction reduction during a game of power. Don't hesitate to negotiate and facilitate the process to your opponent, unfortunately this strategy didn't work very well for the Nazi and they shifted to a more direct form of power: Brute force, whether you hate him Adolf Hitler is one of the most strategic leaders in our modern history and

his understanding of friction reduction and brute force need to be studied he reminds me of the friction reduction skill of Nelson Mandela.

Nelson Mandela (1980s)

While Mandela was still imprisoned on Robben Island, the apartheid government was collapsing economically, but its leaders were terrified of one thing:

If they negotiated with Mandela, would Black South Africans seek revenge and destroy the white minority?

That fear was the friction stopping them from even opening talks. Mandela understood this perfectly.

In 1985, Mandela made a bold move:

He secretly sent a message to Justice Minister Kobie Coetsee saying he was open to dialogue.

But the way he framed the message was the brilliance:

He reassured the government that he sought peaceful transition, not revenge.

This removed the first barrier: “If we negotiate, we will die.”

Mandela insisted the early discussions happen quietly, away from media and public opinion.

Why?

Because apartheid officials feared their own supporters would label them traitors if they were seen talking to Mandela.

So Mandela removed that friction by giving them a safe environment where:

they could explore negotiation

without political consequences

without public backlash

This made it easier for them to step toward him.

Mandela told the government representatives:

There would be no mass expulsions of white South Africans

Their farms, businesses, and rights would be protected

He wanted a future where both groups lived together peacefully These were not concessions.

They were strategic friction removers.

He addressed the fears that made them resist progress:

fear of revenge

fear of collapse

fear of losing identity

By removing these mental obstacles, he made it safer for them to consider ending apartheid.

Friction reduction is the third golden rule, if that guy in high school told me “Hey but you can borrow money and pay back later” or what about I take the money from XYZ and you pay it later, I would have accepted. It’s a strategic negotiation to get them to move.

Make Your Demand

Make a clear and reasonable demand. Don’t make an unfair one, because if the other person feels they have nothing to gain or lose, they’ll likely resort to a desperate attack. You want them to believe it’s a win–win deal. It’s important to communicate your offer clearly. Tell them exactly what they must do to save their life—never assume they’ll automatically know it through survival instinct.

June 13, 2021 — Littoral, Cameroon

How did I end up being physically assaulted by a police officer inside my parents’ house? To understand this, we need to start from the beginning. You may remember that in 2018, I was in a conflict zone in the Northwest region of Cameroon and living in a travel agency. In 2019, we escaped that situation and moved into a small apartment in a very poor neighborhood in Douala.

This city is known for being the most violent in the country in terms of crime and police brutality, but between 2019 and 2023, the violence rate became exceptionally high. This was due to two things: the rise of a new criminal organization called “The Microbes,” and a series of murders in 2020. These murders were committed by both criminals and civilians, because in Cameroon it’s common for thieves or criminals to be burned alive by citizens before the police even arrive. It’s called “popular justice,” and it isn’t rare at all.

By early 2021, police violence grew even worse after the government ordered officers to dismantle The Microbes. They failed, and by mid-June they became desperate. They began carrying out massive arrests of young people across the city and used torture to extract any information—true or false.

Hundreds of innocent people in our neighborhood were arrested and publicly tortured. They were forced to say a name—any name—of someone they believed might know something about the crimes or the organization. Under torture, everyone says the first thing that comes to mind, whatever they think will save them. It’s pure survival instinct. My brother’s name came up multiple times, and it was now his turn to be arrested and tortured.

10 p.m., June 13.

The police were outside our house, trying to peek inside through a tiny hole. They came with one of my brother’s friends to identify him. When they looked inside, they saw two men talking. They asked, “Is it him?” The friend confirmed, and they shouted:

“OPEN THE F*CKING DOOR! POLICE!”

My brother turned to me and said, “I’m not here,” because he understood exactly what was happening. Confused, I hesitated to open the door—so they broke it down with extreme force. They found only one man standing: me. Where was my brother? Everyone in the house ran out of their rooms asking what was going on. The officers began threatening us with guns, demanding to know where he was.

They had seen him standing with me, holding a bottle of water. When they broke the door, I was alone with the bottle. I became the main suspect—the one who could reveal where he went. They threatened to kill my entire family. They shoved me into a room and said they would shoot me if I didn’t talk.

“I’m going to shoot you in the f*cking head in five… four…”

Then I heard my mother screaming outside as another officer assaulted her.

He kept counting:

“…three… two…”

“One.”

Boom.

A fake shot meant to intimidate me. They asked where he was. I didn’t say a word. They repeated: “We saw him with you. If you don’t talk, next time it won’t be a fake shot.”

I was 14–under a gun threat, beaten—so why didn’t I talk? Because their intimidation was poorly executed. I felt that if I talked, they would kill him, and

I would spend my life knowing I caused my own brother's death. That guilt was stronger than fear. Love makes you ready to die without blinking.

Only persuasion could have broken that dedication. The police chose intimidation, and they chose the wrong person. If they had made me believe he wouldn't be harmed—if they had reduced my guilt—they might have gotten something out of me.

And where was he actually? He had escaped through a wall connected to our neighbor's garage and He asked me to say nothing. After more than thirty minutes, the police finally discovered where he had gone. They went into our neighbor's garage and caught him, unfortunately. They tortured him and arrested him, but he was released a few weeks later and officially declared innocent.

I didn't fail my mission, even though he still ended up being arrested. That night, I fell asleep around 3 a.m., and woke up at 6 a.m. because I had my final end-of-year exam. I hadn't studied, my mind was shattered, and I'd spent the whole night traumatized—but guess what? I passed the exam well above the average.

That doesn't mean I wasn't affected. I developed a post-traumatic response that lasted for years. We'll explore that in Chapter 3, where we'll see how to survive this kind of situation and how to rebuild after it.

The measure of a man's power is the fear he inspires in others—and the wisdom to use it sparingly.

Summary

In this section, I define the limits of intimidation and establish the rules that govern effective power. Violence and pressure are not problems by themselves; misuse is. When intimidation turns into humiliation, it triggers desperation instead of submission. Public humiliation attacks dignity, and dignity is something humans will defend even at the cost of their own safety. That is why humiliation creates reckless resistance instead of control.

I explain that fear must never push an opponent into survival mode. When people feel trapped, cornered, or stripped of all options, their brain abandons rationality and switches to pure survival. In that state, consequences disappear. They will attack, betray, or die fighting. Power fails the moment you leave someone with nothing to lose. True control always leaves an exit.

I introduce friction reduction as a core strategic principle. If you want someone to move, you must remove the obstacles—psychological, practical, or emotional—that block their path. History shows that even the most ruthless leaders understood this: negotiation, reassurance, and structured exits are often more effective than brute force. Mandela removed fear to make peace possible; regimes that ignored friction created revolt instead of compliance.

In my personal framework, intimidation is a precision tool. I never humiliate. I never corner. I always make the path forward clear and survivable. Power is not about breaking people—it is about guiding them to move where you want without forcing them to fight. Fear is useful, but only when paired with restraint, clarity, and strategic empathy.

How to Bend Minds

When it comes to generating new ideas or understanding how the world truly works, I turn to nature and observe how everything is organized. To understand economics, look at how cells manage energy. To understand how a society should be structured, observe anthills or beehives. Nature rarely makes mistakes—and when it does, evolution or natural selection corrects them.

If badly structured beehives existed, natural selection would be ruthless. They would disappear so quickly that we would never even notice them. Natural selection eliminates nature's mistakes; evolution improves them. After millions of years, what remains is the most efficient version possible. If nature is that sophisticated and effective, why not study it when it comes to intimidation strategies?

In nature, we often see extremely weak creatures surviving against ruthless predators. From them, we can learn how a small corporation might survive a war against a massive international company.

Take the owl butterfly. It survives not because it is strong, but because it looks dangerous. Its body is fragile and defenseless, yet evolution gave it large eye-spots on its wings that resemble the eyes of an owl or a much larger predator. In a split second, attackers hesitate, doubt, or retreat—and that hesitation is the difference between life and death. If the owl butterfly appeared as weak as it truly is, it would be killed instantly.

Figure 4 owl butterfly

Nature teaches a brutal rule: what matters most is not what you are, but what you appear to be. Humans face the same reality. When confronting a stronger opponent—whether in business, society, or conflict—survival often depends on projecting size, confidence, and threat before real strength exists.

When you are too weak, you cannot truly hurt your opponent. They have almost nothing to lose, so intimidation alone does not work. What should you do? Turn to seduction or persuasion? No—there is no time. Your opponent is hungry. In such situations, you must bend minds. You must deceive.

Do not hesitate to deceive your opponent. This is war, and all strategies are valid.

If you are very weak, you must master the art of deception. I could write an entire book about it. Deception is an art, and its most difficult aspect is maintaining the illusion. Over time, most deceptions fail, and predators return, ready to strike.

That is why you must prepare the end before the beginning. Plan your next move before the illusion fades. A powerful strategy is this: use deception to create fake intimidation and buy time. While the deception is still working, shift to seduction—gain trust, lower your opponent's guard. When the moment comes, betray them. Make sure the strike is decisive enough to eliminate any chance of revenge.

It is harsh, but victory demands it. Every great leader understands that whether they are remembered as good or evil depends entirely on whether they won.

Genghis Khan frequently pretended to retreat or surrender, luring enemies into complacency. Enemy armies believed they had won, relaxed their defenses, and opened their cities. Once inside— or once the enemy had spread out—he would turn and annihilate them completely, often

exterminating entire cities as a warning. Other powerful examples of this strategy include the Trojan Horse and Vlad the Impaler.

The Trojan Horse

For ten long years, the Greeks and the Trojans were locked in a merciless war. Heroes fell, cities burned, and neither side could break the other. Troy stood unconquered behind its massive walls, protected by pride, tradition, and the belief that the gods favored it.

The Greeks, exhausted and desperate, realized that strength alone would never defeat Troy. Victory would require something more dangerous than swords: deception.

One morning, the Trojans woke to an impossible sight. The Greek camp was abandoned. The ships were gone. The beach was silent.

Before Troy's gates stood a gigantic wooden horse, carefully crafted and towering over the walls.

No army. No threat. Only a single captive Greek, Sinon, left behind.

Sinon told a perfectly designed lie. He claimed the Greeks had surrendered and built the horse as an offering to Athena, deliberately making it too large to fit inside Troy so the Trojans could never claim it and gain the goddess's favor. He spoke with fear, humility, and apparent sincerity, seducing the Trojans through emotion, religion, and ego.

Despite warnings from a few skeptics, pride took over. The Trojans believed they had won. They dragged the horse into their city, celebrated, feasted, and completely lowered their guard.

That night, Troy slept in triumph.

The seduction was perfect.

Drunk on victory, convinced the war was over, the Trojans left gates unguarded and soldiers unarmored. A city that had resisted for a decade opened itself willingly.

At midnight, the horse came alive.

Elite Greek warriors—Odysseus among them—emerged silently, killed the guards, and opened Troy's gates from within. Greek ships, which had only pretended to leave, returned under cover of darkness.

What followed was merciless brutality.

Greek soldiers flooded the city. Homes burned. Men were slaughtered in their sleep. Priests were killed at their altars. Women and children were dragged away as slaves.

Vlad the Impaler

In 15th-century Wallachia, power was fragile and betrayal constant. Surrounded by enemies and internal rivals, Vlad III ruled a land where mercy was seen as weakness. Nobles conspired in shadows, foreign powers bribed traitors, and loyalty lasted only as long as fear did not.

Vlad understood one truth better than anyone: survival depends on controlling perception and terror.

The Wallachian nobles—the boyars—had a long history of betrayal. Many had helped overthrow and kill Vlad's father and older brother. When Vlad reclaimed the throne, he appeared calm, diplomatic, even forgiving.

He announced a grand banquet, inviting the boyars and rivals to celebrate peace, unity, and a new beginning. They were welcomed with food, wine, music, and smiles. Vlad spoke of loyalty, stability, and rebuilding the country together.

This was the deception.

The boyars mistook his composure for weakness and his hospitality for trust. Surrounded by comfort, their suspicion faded.

The seduction was psychological.

They felt chosen, forgiven, safe. Guards relaxed. No weapons were drawn.

Then, with a single command, everything changed.

Vlad ordered the doors sealed.

His soldiers stormed the hall. Some nobles were killed instantly. Others were dragged outside, where sharpened stakes awaited them. One by one, they were impaled alive. Those spared were forced into brutal labor until they died of exhaustion.

By morning, hundreds of impaled bodies stood around the city—a message impossible to misunderstand.

Vlad had not merely eliminated his enemies; he had turned their trust into the weapon.

Most of the time, you have no real leverage over your opponent. You cannot hurt them directly, so you must combine multiple forms of power. Begin with intimidation through deception to gain time. Then use seduction to lower their guard. Finally, apply brute force through betrayal.

Zhuge Liang

Zhuge Liang, the legendary strategist of ancient China's Three Kingdoms period, was known as a man whose mind was more dangerous than any army. Generals whispered that he could turn defeat into victory with a single idea.

One day, he found himself in an apparently hopeless situation. He occupied a nearly empty fortress with only a handful of guards while a massive enemy army marched toward him.

Any ordinary commander would have fled.

Zhuge Liang understood something else: reputation is a weapon.

He ordered the gates left wide open. Then he climbed the wall, sat calmly, and began playing his zither—as if welcoming guests rather than facing annihilation.

This was calculated.

His enemy feared his reputation for traps and deception. The open gates, the silence, the absolute calm all communicated one message:

“If you attack, you are already dead.”

He created intimidation out of nothing.

When the enemy commander arrived, he froze. Everything felt wrong. Too easy. Too quiet. Too perfect.

Convinced it was a trap, he ordered a full retreat.

Zhuge Liang never lifted a sword.

He lost no soldiers.

Yet he gained:

His fortress intact

His army preserved

His reputation amplified

Enemies more terrified than ever

By faking intimidation, he achieved real security and real power.

Operation Fortitude

In 1944, the Allies planned to invade Nazi-occupied France. The Germans expected an attack but did not know where. Normandy was only one possibility. Pas-de-Calais, the narrowest point between England and France, seemed far more logical.

The Allies could not rely on brute force alone. They needed the Germans confused, afraid, and misallocating their troops.

Thus, Operation Fortitude was born—a massive deception campaign.

A fake army, the “First U.S. Army Group,” was created under General Patton, whom the Germans deeply feared.

Dummy tanks, planes, and fake radio traffic simulated a massive buildup in southeastern England.

Double agents fed the Germans false intelligence.

Figure 5 operation fortitude

From the German perspective, an unstoppable invasion force was preparing to strike Calais. The deception worked. German forces were held back, waiting for an attack that never came.

When D-Day arrived in Normandy, the Germans hesitated. Key units remained immobilized at Calais, allowing the Allies to establish a beachhead with far less resistance.

The bluff helped turn the tide of the war.

Operation Fortitude proved that in modern warfare, psychological strategy and deception can be just as decisive as tanks and bullets.

The measure of a man's power is the fear he inspires in others—and the wisdom to use it sparingly.

Summary

In this section, I examine the art of influence and psychological strategy. Strength alone rarely guarantees survival or victory; perception and deception often matter more than reality. Nature demonstrates this relentlessly—creatures survive by appearing stronger than they are, and evolution rewards those who master illusion. Humans operate on the same principle: intimidation, seduction, and misdirection can shape outcomes when direct force is impossible.

Deception is a tool, not a flaw. History is full of those who understood it and thrived: Genghis Khan feigned retreats, the Greeks used the Trojan Horse, Vlad the Impaler turned trust into terror, and Zhuge Liang leveraged fear without a

single sword. Each manipulated appearances to control the minds of opponents, gaining time, advantage, and absolute security. Strategy is about bending perception to your will, striking decisively when opportunity peaks, and ensuring that victory is irreversible.

In my personal framework, psychological dominance is essential. Every move must project strength, manipulate expectation, and prepare the end before the beginning. Victory depends not on brute force alone, but on timing, deception, and calculated terror. Real power lies in the ability to make others act as if you are stronger than you are—then to finish the game before they recover.

Keep in mind

Threat is perception, not reality. Fear arises from possibility, uncertainty, and loss aversion—not certainty. Recognizing this distinction turns survival into control. Awareness of threat allows strategy to replace emotion.

Intimidation is deliberate influence through perceived danger. Its power lies in subtlety, uncertainty, and perception. History shows small actors can topple giants by exploiting this principle: David versus Goliath, Gandhi versus the British, Zuckerberg against competitors. The goal is to make others reassess risk without direct confrontation.

Controlled signals outweigh brute force. Posture, gaze, voice, and positioning communicate threat silently. Timing, restraint, and the ability to withdraw are as vital as aggression. Power is measured by the fear you inspire—and the discipline to wield it strategically.

Humiliation and cornering destroy control. Fear must never push an opponent into pure survival mode. When people feel trapped, rationality disappears. They attack, betray, or fight recklessly. True power always leaves an exit and preserves dignity.

Reduce friction to guide movement. Remove psychological, practical, and emotional obstacles.

Negotiation, reassurance, and structured exits often achieve compliance better than brute force. Mandela's approach proves this: removing fear can achieve lasting influence, while ignoring it breeds revolt.

Intimidation is precision, not coercion. Never humiliate. Never corner. Always make the path forward clear. Fear is a tool, only effective when paired with restraint, clarity, and strategic empathy.

Perception is more potent than strength. Deception and illusion shape outcomes where force cannot. Nature rewards those who appear stronger than they are; humans operate on the same principle. Intimidation, seduction, and misdirection are essential for survival and dominance.

Deception is a tool, mastery is strategy. Historical leaders—Genghis Khan, the Greeks, Vlad the Impaler, Zhuge Liang—manipulated appearances to control outcomes. Victory comes from bending perception, striking decisively, and ensuring irreversible results.

Psychological dominance is essential. Every move must project strength, manipulate expectation, and plan the end before the beginning. Real power lies in making others act as if you are stronger than you are—and finishing the game before they recover.

The ultimate rule: guide, influence, and control perception without forcing conflict. Strength is temporary; perception endures. Fear, when paired with clarity, restraint, and strategic insight, becomes a weapon more potent than any blade.

Chapter 3 – The End Game

Open your Eyes

The night of May 19, 2018, in Northwest.

My parents rushed into my bedroom and woke me up at 4 AM, along with all my siblings, alerting us that a tragic event had just occurred. They had received a message that toxic gas had emanated from Lac Awing and was spreading throughout the city. Hundreds of people were reportedly dying, and we had to do everything to protect ourselves and our family.

It was 4 AM, but everyone in our neighborhood was panicked and choking. Millions of people were awake, each doing everything they could to survive. I was 11 years old—afraid of death—but I didn't really worry. Since we had entered that conflict zone, I already knew I might not make it to 12, so I had accepted my fate.

Spoiler: I survived. Yes, it's obvious—because if I had died, I wouldn't be here writing these lines. But how? Simply because it was fake news, spread by terrorist groups to create panic in the city and intimidate the government and its citizens. I didn't experience physical violence, yet the fear and choking were intense, and my safety felt extremely threatened.

I could have shared this story in the previous session, but it feels right to share it now, because since that day, I've always watched my back. I keep my eyes open constantly. It's mentally exhausting and draining, but in a high-stakes

environment, you can't afford to relax. You have to stay alert and a little paranoid.

Don't enter your house through the front door. When driving, don't go directly from A to B—it's too predictable, too obvious, too dangerous. Always assume that danger is watching you. In a high-level game, you can't turn your guard off. You can't seduce a Mafia boss, betray him, take over his empire, and then sleep with your eyes closed.

Most humans are in constant sleep mode. When driving, you don't count how many cars are behind you. When invited to an island on a friend's private jet and offered "sexy girls," you don't notice the cameras in the room, you touch the wrong hands, you reveal too much about your work—you're asleep, and you need to wake up.

A very good example of someone who understands the value of vigilance is Vladimir Putin. He travels with his own toilet seat because he can't risk leaving biological traces of his wealth in a foreign country. It might sound extreme, but extreme caution is necessary when you have too many enemies, when you've betrayed people without completely crushing them, when revenge is a real fear.

And then there's the counterexample: Anna Politkovskaya. Courage alone was not enough for her— she played at a high level but didn't maintain the level of vigilance needed to survive. A reminder that in a dangerous game, brilliance without prudence can be fatal.

Anna Politkovskaya

In 2006, Anna Politkovskaya was operating in a sphere where information was power, and courage alone was not enough—every move carried enormous risk. She had spent years reporting on Chechnya, exposing corruption, abuses, and war crimes. In the high-stakes game she played, intelligence and insight were her strongest weapons. Yet, unlike a chess grandmaster who anticipates multiple moves ahead, Anna sometimes underestimated the environment she was navigating.

Colleagues and friends had warned her repeatedly. She received signals—subtle, but clear—to step back, to increase her security protocols, to be more guarded. But Anna had an unshakable commitment to her mission. She believed that slowing down or shielding herself too much would allow the system she was exposing to continue unchecked. She was playing at the highest level— reporting truths that powerful actors wanted buried—but her personal vigilance was not always scaled to match the danger.

Anna's game required constant awareness: surveillance could be around any corner; threats could emerge in seemingly mundane moments. She often pushed through the caution that might have slowed others, believing that her work and her presence in dangerous zones were irreplaceable. Yet, in that arena, high-level stakes demand not only brilliance and courage but also a calculated paranoia, an ever-active guard.

Her story, reframed this way, becomes a lesson in the unforgiving balance of high-level operations: one can possess extraordinary skill, insight, and fearlessness, but without matching that with meticulous vigilance and prudence, even the most brilliant strategies can falter. The danger wasn't in

the mission itself—it was in the gap between the level of the game she was playing and the level of caution she maintained.

We saw in Chapter 1, Section 3, that the Soviet Union and the USA almost brought the world to an end simply because they couldn't recognize an intimidation attempt. If you close your eyes, you wouldn't even be able to detect one.

Sometimes, when you live through a long period of peace, you start to take it for granted. You get too comfortable, and you become fragile—easy prey. That's the perfect moment for your prey to turn into your predator. Keep this in mind: if the lion falls asleep too long, he risks waking up to find that the zebra has become a carnivore.

In the last session, I said that we need to look at nature sometimes to understand how things are supposed to work, and work well. So, what happens in nature to animals that live too long without a predator? A classic example is the dodo.

Think about the dodo. It lived for hundreds of thousands of years without any predators on

Mauritius, so it lost all fear. When humans arrived, it couldn't recognize danger, couldn't react, and was wiped out almost instantly. This is the perfect example of what happens when you stay comfortable too long—when you stop paying attention, when you assume the world will never change. In life, business, or high-stakes games, if you live too long without a threat, you risk becoming like the dodo: easy to destroy because you've forgotten how to survive.

It’s the same in business. Huge corporations that get too comfortable can be eaten alive by small, aggressive startups. When you’re first in a market, you must maintain your position by strategically jumping on every trend.

One company that has been sleeping since 2019 is Apple. They’ve lost their innovative edge; everything feels the same now. Android is eating their lunch, and more and more people are switching from the iOS ecosystem to Android. Apple missed the AI wave and is currently falling behind in the smart glasses revolution. If they don’t wake up, I fear they could end up like BlackBerry.

BlackBerry

Once, BlackBerry wasn’t just a phone company—it was a fortress of business communication.

Executives and professionals swore by its secure email, physical keyboards, and reliability. In the 2000s, BlackBerry dominated the corporate world. Its name was synonymous with control, productivity, and cutting-edge mobile technology. They were playing at the top level.

But as the smartphone revolution began, led by Apple and later Google’s Android ecosystem, BlackBerry started to relax. They had conquered the market and the world seemed to follow their rules. Their leadership assumed their position was unshakable. The paranoia that had once driven their innovation—constant vigilance, anticipating competitors’ moves, always staying one step ahead—started to fade.

They underestimated the speed of change. Touchscreens, app ecosystems, and consumer-centric design were evolving rapidly, but BlackBerry kept

believing their corporate customers would never leave. Instead of scanning the horizon for threats and pivoting aggressively, they focused on defending their comfort zone. Innovation slowed. Decision-making became conservative.

By the time they tried to catch up, the game had moved far beyond their reach. Apple and Android players weren't just competing—they had redefined the rules entirely. BlackBerry's once-dominant fortress became a relic, a cautionary example of what happens when a titan of an industry stops acting like a player in a high-stakes game.

The lesson is simple: dominance breeds complacency, and comfort is a trap. If you're at the top, you can't just play defense—you must maintain paranoia, anticipate shifts, and guard your lead like your life depends on it. BlackBerry didn't, and the market moved on without them.

USA VS Iraq

After the attacks of September 11, 2001, the United States entered a psychological state dominated by strategic paranoia. The cost of underestimating an enemy suddenly felt existential. In that environment, uncertainty itself became a threat. Iraq, under Saddam Hussein, was interpreted not just as a hostile state, but as a potential future catastrophe—suspected weapons of mass destruction, defiance of international inspections, past aggression, and an opaque regime.

From the U.S. leadership's perspective at the time, the logic was harsh but internally coherent: If the cost of being wrong by doing nothing is annihilation, then overreaction feels rational.

This is where paranoia transformed into policy. The invasion of Iraq in 2003 was driven less by confirmed facts and more by worst-case scenario thinking. The idea was not “Iraq is attacking us now,” but “what if we wait and they do later?” In high-stakes survival games, especially among superpowers, allowing a potential enemy to grow unchecked can feel more dangerous than striking first.

In that framework, brute force becomes a form of insurance. Not elegant. Not subtle. But decisive. The belief was that overwhelming force would remove uncertainty, eliminate a possible future threat, and demonstrate dominance.

Don’t get me wrong—paranoia doesn’t just make you crazy. Used correctly, it’s a weapon. A weapon that makes your enemy look crazy instead.

When you stop being predictable, your opponent struggles to anticipate your next move. They start overthinking, spreading their resources thin, trying to defend every possible angle. They waste energy, time, and focus.

That’s exactly what the Allies did to the Nazis during Operation Fortitude. By creating uncertainty and false signals, they forced the enemy to prepare everywhere at once, weakening them where it truly mattered.

Controlled paranoia is strategy

When you operate at the highest stakes, you cannot afford to ever turn your guard off.

Summary

In this section, I explore the necessity of constant vigilance in high-stakes environments. Life has shown me that survival depends on anticipating danger before it arrives and never letting comfort lull you into weakness. Fear is not a flaw—it's a signal. The world is unpredictable, and ignoring threats guarantees destruction, whether from nature, competitors, or enemies.

Observation and paranoia are strategic tools. Blind courage or brilliance without caution is insufficient, as shown by those who fell despite talent or intent. I study patterns, history, and human behavior to identify risks that others miss. Complacency is fatal; dominant powers and corporations fall not because they lack strength, but because they stop acting like players in a high-stakes game.

In my personal framework, awareness is relentless. Every move, every environment, every interaction is analyzed. Comfort is a trap. Survival and dominance demand preparation, calculation, and controlled paranoia. Like a predator awake in the night, I remain alert, adaptive, and invisible in my vigilance, understanding that only those who never sleep maintain power.

Escape the Snare

I just saw a very funny video on my feed. It showed a guy riding a bicycle through a zoo when he was suddenly attacked by an elephant. What made it funny was the way he reacted: he threw his bike aside, jumped off, and tried to run away. It was incredibly illogical and hilarious at the same time. But it also reminded me of how our brain is wired for survival. Under adrenaline and stress, it doesn't always allow us to make the most logical decisions.

This is why we need to train our minds to react better in dangerous situations—to stay logical and rational. Doing so can increase our chances of survival when we become victims.

So, how should you react to an intimidation attempt?

Training your brain to perform better under stress is not abstract—it's a skill that can be deliberately built. Research shows that practices such as mindfulness, executive-function training, and structured stress exposure strengthen cognitive flexibility, allowing you to regulate emotions and think more clearly when pressure rises. This is why military and emergency professionals repeatedly train in high-stress simulations: repeated exposure teaches the brain that stress does not automatically mean panic. Over time, the nervous system becomes more adaptive, adrenaline stops hijacking decision-making, and rational thinking stays online even in dangerous situations.

The first thing I recommend is training your brain to assess risk. When someone tries to intimidate you, you need to evaluate what you stand to lose if you don't comply, and then decide whether you can afford that loss. If you have more to lose than to gain, the best option is to move toward negotiation.

Try to negotiate in order to minimize your losses. Show your opponent that what they are demanding is unfair, and that if they force you to comply, you would have nothing left to lose—which would push you to retaliate, even if it means mutual destruction. In a fictional geopolitical example, it would sound like this:

"My country cannot give you XYZ. If we are forced to do so, we would have nothing left to lose and would attack yours. We might lose the war, but we would still inflict significant damage. Instead, why don't we give you ABC?"

The idea is to make it clear that what they are asking for represents everything to you. If it is taken away, you become far more dangerous because you no longer have anything to protect. This negotiation strategy is itself a form of intimidation.

Sometimes, survival requires appearing bigger or stronger than you actually are. We see this in nature, for example with owl butterflies. Don't hesitate to carefully exaggerate your capabilities if necessary—but never believe your own lies. Always keep enough energy and options to escape if you're exposed. That was one of the mistakes made by the Aztecs.

The Owl God

Around five hundred years ago, during the early 16th century, the Aztec Empire faced one of the greatest threats in its history: the arrival of the Spanish conquistadors. The Aztecs were a powerful civilization, highly organized, numerically superior, and deeply religious. They believed the universe was governed by gods who constantly intervened in human affairs through signs, omens, and symbols.

Among these symbols, the owl held a special place. In Aztec culture, owls were associated with death, the night, and the underworld. They were seen as messengers of divine forces—especially those linked to destruction and rebirth. As the Spanish advanced, strange events were reported: comets in the sky, temples catching fire, and owls appearing in unusual numbers. These signs were interpreted by priests and leaders as proof that supernatural forces were involved.

Instead of treating these beliefs as symbolic tools to maintain morale or intimidate enemies, many Aztec leaders began to believe them literally. They convinced themselves that the gods—sometimes referred to through omens like the “owl god”—would intervene directly and protect the empire.

Rituals intensified. Sacrifices increased. Confidence turned into certainty.

This belief became dangerous.

Because they trusted divine protection, the Aztecs failed to prepare realistic escape routes, adaptive strategies, or contingency plans. They underestimated the Spanish weapons, their alliances with rival tribes, and the

impact of disease. More importantly, they did not plan for defeat, because defeat was considered impossible if the gods were on their side.

When the tide of war turned against them, it was already too late. There was no organized retreat, no strategic withdrawal, no escape. The same belief that once unified and strengthened them had become a trap.

Exaggeration and myth can be powerful tools for intimidation and cohesion, but the moment you start believing them yourself, you lose flexibility. Survival requires realism, nature rewards those who can adapt and escape.

Risk calculation is mainly about analyzing your environment, your opponent's resources, and every factor that could influence the outcome of an intimidation attempt. When it comes to assessing risk, I use a very simple method:

Risk = Probability × Impact

Probability represents the likelihood of an event occurring. A score of 0 means it is definitely not going to happen—it's essentially a lie. A score of 10 means it is extremely likely.

Impact works the same way. An impact of 0 means it would not affect you at all, while a 10 means it would completely crush you.

Do you remember my fight in high school? Here's a QR code to the video:

In that video, you can see that I was being intimidated, and I decided to strike first. I made a quick and simple risk calculation.

If I punched him first, what was the likelihood that he would punch me back? I estimated it at 2. What would be the impact of those punches on me? I estimated that at 4.

So my total risk was:

Risk = 2 × 4 = 8

Most of the time, I only take risks that are below 10. I don't necessarily recommend doing the same —it depends on how valuable the reward is. You can also rate rewards on a scale from 0 to 10.

In my case, the reward was a 10, because I knew that if I acted, I would never be intimidated again. Since risk < reward, I went all in.

I use this same method in business when deciding whether to make risky moves. Kodak bankruptcy, 2012

Kodak is a classic example of a company that failed because it did not properly calculate risk. Ironically, Kodak invented the digital camera in 1975, yet chose not to pursue it seriously.

The "intimidation" Kodak faced was digital photography. Executives perceived it as a threat to their core business: film sales. Instead of objectively assessing the risk, they emotionally protected their existing model.

Proper Risk Calculation (What Kodak Should Have Done)

Event: Digital photography replaces film.

Probability: High (8–9)

Digital sensors were improving rapidly, storage costs were falling, and consumer behavior was clearly shifting.

Impact: Catastrophic (9–10)

Film was Kodak's main source of revenue. If film died, Kodak's business model collapsed.

Risk = 9 × 9 = 81 → Extreme risk

According to your model, this level of risk demands immediate action, adaptation, or self-disruption.

Kodak implicitly treated the probability as low (2–3) and assumed it would take decades for digital to matter. They also underestimated the impact, believing their brand would protect them.

Their internal (wrong) calculation looked like this:

Risk = 3 × 4 = 12

That false calculation justified inaction.

Kodak chose short-term safety over long-term survival. They were afraid of cannibalizing film revenue, so they delayed investing aggressively in digital. By

the time the risk became undeniable, competitors had already dominated the market.

Kodak filed for bankruptcy in 2012.

When you operate at the highest stakes, you cannot afford to ever turn your guard off.

Summary

In this section, I explore how survival and rational decision-making are often compromised by instinct, emotion, and flawed beliefs. I show that under stress, the brain doesn't automatically act logically, and that failing to train it for high-pressure situations can be deadly—whether in personal conflict, business, or even entire civilizations.

Because most people react emotionally or cling to comforting myths, I believe survival depends on deliberate mental preparation. Risk must be calculated, consequences understood, and escape options preserved. Exaggeration, intimidation, and myth can be powerful tools—but only if you remain aware that they are tools, not guarantees. Believing in them blindly leads to ruin.

In my approach, I prioritize clarity, adaptability, and strategic action. When facing threats, I assess probability and impact, weigh risks versus rewards, and act decisively. In high-stakes environments —whether negotiating, fighting, or making business moves—hesitation and wishful thinking are weaknesses. Ruthlessness and exaggeration are acceptable if executed with awareness, control, and an exit plan.

I maintain a strict separation between strategy and identity. In life, I am measured, observant, and disciplined. In high-stakes situations, I play the game fully, leveraging psychology, preparation, and risk assessment to survive and win. The world rewards those who anticipate threats, adapt, and escape when necessary.

The Illusion of Moral

Throughout this book, we discussed many sensitive topics. Some examples were deliberately oversimplified to help you grasp the point I was trying to make. I am aware that, at times, I lacked nuance and did not explicitly condemn certain reprehensible behaviors. Some of the strategies presented here may be perceived as amoral, and you may even consider them evil. The empathy I spoke of in the preface is what makes life worth living. The strategy I speak of now is what keeps you alive to live it. Do not confuse the soldier with the father.

That is why I took the time to write this very short section—not to teach you something, but to think with you about a fundamental question: what is morality?

Is something good because society or God allows it?

Or is it allowed by society or God because it is good?

That is the question. I do not have a definitive answer yet.

If something is good only because God or society allows it, then if they were to allow murder, murder would be considered good. This would mean that good and evil are merely perceptions, not fundamental truths. In that case, morality would not be objective—it would be imposed. We would simply be animals living under rules chosen by a third party, slaves to our reality, unable to live fully by instinct the way other animals do.

Some religions or societies openly state that certain actions are good solely because God said so.

But if that is true, would murder become good if God declared it so?

In some countries, it is considered normal for a widow to marry a male relative of her deceased husband—often his brother or another close family member. This practice is known as levirate marriage or widow inheritance. In South Sudan, for example, certain communities still practice it. It does not feel wrong to them because they grew up in that cultural environment. It may sound disturbing to you, but that is because you were raised in a different culture.

This shows that what is considered morally correct can depend heavily on cultural context. So the real question becomes: is it objectively wrong to marry a relative of your deceased husband?

Do not answer based on what you learned from your environment. I am searching for an original truth—one that does not rely on culture, religion, or society.

Science suggests that incest is harmful because it increases genetic diseases and reduces genetic diversity. Yet nature seems to disagree, as many animals reproduce with close relatives. Clearly, defining good and evil is not simple.

So what would you do?

Do you refer to the law of your country?

A law written by a genocidal government?

A government run by financial criminals, pedophiles, or murderers?

A country that went to war and killed civilians?

Is that your moral reference?

Anyone who takes a tyrant as a moral reference eventually becomes a tyrant themselves.

Isn’t it fascinating that since the beginning of history, every war has always been “won by the good people”? Think about World War I, World War II, the Cold War, or even mythology. What most people ignore is that in war, everyone is wrong—but the winner becomes right. Why? Because the winner writes the story, educates future generations, and defines what is good and evil.

When you destroy your enemy completely, you are the only one left to speak. There is no one left to explain how wrong you were. History becomes a one-sided narrative.

If the Nazis had won World War II, we would not only speak German—we would also be educated through their system, learning how wrong the Allies were.

What I am trying to say is simple: we cannot rely on external morality.

We must create our own.

You should define your own moral framework. I will show you mine.

My Personal Moral Framework

In my personal moral code, I will do whatever it takes to win in business or professional life but I will always sacrifice myself for the people that I love. I'd even sacrifice my professional life for them if needed to be done.

However, in business if something is not allowed but I can accept the consequences—and if it helps me reach my goal—I will not hesitate. Imagine you are driving your pregnant wife to the hospital and she is about to give birth. Would you break the speed limit? Probably yes. Saving her life matters more than a fine. This is not about morality; it is about risk calculation and survival.

In business I value individual survival over community values, and I value human survival over all other species. I believe it is fair to be "evil" in a high-stakes game where everyone else is already playing dirty.

Keep your stoicism and virtue for your friends and family—not for business partners who want to see you fail.

If you are afraid to use deception, to cheat, or if you have too much virtue to betray your enemy, then do not enter the game of power. The tools described in this book are the basic tools of that game. Entering it without them is equivalent to digging your own grave.

Do you want to survive—or do you want to be a dead body with good intentions?

Business rewards those who crush their enemies first.

One of the biggest mistakes people make is failing to separate their professional self from their real self.

Business is a competitive arena governed by incentives, power, leverage, and survival. Real life is where empathy, loyalty, protection, and virtue should exist. Confusing the two will either make you weak in business or destructive in your personal life.

It is acceptable to be ruthless in business if you remain kind in real life. What is unacceptable is bringing business cruelty back home—toward your family, friends, or social circle. At home, you should be protective, generous, and virtuous. In society, you should be someone people feel safe around.

Your real self must remain human.

However, in business, virtue alone is often a liability. When money, power, and status are at stake, many people abandon ethics the moment it becomes profitable to do so. Refusing to acknowledge this reality does not make you moral—it makes you naïve.

That said, being evil openly is stupidity.

Reputation is a form of capital. Someone known for deception, betrayal, or chaos will quickly run out of victims. Once your name becomes toxic, doors close, partnerships disappear, and every interaction becomes defensive. No one trusts a snake that proudly shows its fangs.

This is why appearance matters.

When you betray an opponent, you never do it publicly. You do it strategically, quietly, and with preparation. You control the narrative. Through timing, framing, and influence, you make it appear as though they betrayed you. Use Propaganda, it's not lying for pleasure—it is defense through perception.

You must appear fair, calm, and reasonable—both in business and in public life. You should be seen as someone ethical, stable, and cooperative. Not because you always are, but because perception defines opportunity.

Be good in real life.

Appear good in business.

Understand that these are not the same thing.

Your moral discipline is not about never crossing lines—it is about knowing when, why, and at what cost. Save your kindness for people who deserve it. Save your ruthlessness for arenas where it is required. And never let the poison of business infect your personal relationships.

The strongest individuals are not those who are always good or always evil—but those who can switch without losing themselves.

When you operate at the highest stakes, you cannot afford to ever turn your guard off.

Summary

In this section, I question the idea that morality is absolute. I explore whether good and evil are real truths or simply rules defined by society, religion,

culture, and ultimately by those who win. History shows that morality is often written by the victors, not by some universal standard.

Because external moral systems are inconsistent and often controlled by flawed or corrupt powers, I believe we cannot rely on them. Each individual must create their own moral framework.

In mine, survival and winning come first in high-stakes environments. In business and power games, pure virtue is a weakness. Sometimes deception, rule-breaking, and moral flexibility are necessary— if you are willing to accept the consequences. However, this ruthlessness must remain strategic and invisible, because reputation is capital.

I strongly separate my business self from my real self. In real life, I choose to be kind, protective, and human. In business, I play the game as it is, not as I wish it were. I appear ethical and fair in public while acting decisively in private.

Keep in mind

Survival demands vigilance. Comfort is a trap, and fear is not a flaw—it is a signal. Life favors those who anticipate danger before it arrives and never let ease dull their edge. Ignoring threats—whether from nature, competitors, or enemies—guarantees destruction.

The tools of survival are observation and calculated paranoia. Talent or courage alone is insufficient; history is full of those who fell despite brilliance. Study patterns, human behavior, and history. Complacency kills; dominant powers and corporations fail when they stop acting like players in a high-stakes game.

Mental preparation is everything. Instinct, emotion, and comforting myths mislead the untrained mind. Survival depends on deliberate calculation: assess risks, understand consequences, and preserve escape options. Exaggeration, intimidation, and myth are tools, not guarantees.

Act with clarity, decisiveness, and control. Weigh probability, impact, and reward. Hesitation is weakness; ruthlessness is acceptable if executed strategically. Maintain awareness, keep plans invisible, and always preserve your exit.

Separate strategy from identity. In life, be measured, disciplined, and human. In high-stakes situations, play the game fully—leveraging psychology,

preparation, and adaptability. Anticipate threats, act decisively, and escape when necessary.

Morality is a tool, not a law. Absolute good and evil are illusions created by victors. In business and power, pure virtue is weakness. Rule-breaking, deception, and moral flexibility are necessary when consequences are calculated. Protect reputation while executing ruthlessness discreetly.

The ultimate rule: survive, adapt, and dominate. Comfort, hesitation, or blind morality are weaknesses. Power belongs to those who remain awake, aware, and invisible in their vigilance.

Conclusion

Here we are—it's the end of this book. I hope you enjoyed reading it. How do you feel about my analysis of intimidation and the power game? Anyway, it doesn't matter whether you agree with my strategies or not. What matters most is: did this book accomplish its mission? Did you learn more about human psychology, how to defend yourself against intimidation, and how to survive in a dangerous environment? If the answer is yes, then I'm happy to know that all the time I spent writing this book over the past week was useful in some way.

I started writing this book six days ago, I'm glad to see that you read this because it means you went all the way and took my work seriously. I didn't have much time to go deeper into some topics like brute force, seduction, or persuasion.

However, I recommend reading Robert Greene's books: The 48 Laws of Power, The Laws of Human Nature, and The Art of Seduction. These books might fill in any gaps I may have missed. You can also reach out to me on Instagram @Djibril_Mouhaman. I plan to do deeper research on these subjects and will share updates with you. I'm currently thinking about transferring to a college where I can study human psychology and behavior more thoroughly.

Feel free to share your thoughts and reach out to me on Instagram. Thank you for reading my book! ;)

The Psychology of Power, Fear, and Silent Domination

THE FORBIDDEN ART OF INTIMIDATION

DJIBRIL MOUHAMAN

Few quotes from the book

“I lived in a war zone where mornings felt like a lottery.”

Djibril Mouhaman

“It is an unfortunate fact that we can secure peace only by preparing for war.”

John F. Kennedy

“Seduction is the weakest form of power and we can’t rely on it”

Djibril Mouhaman

“You need to create an emotion stronger than fear to keep your allies loyal even when threatened. “

Djibril Mouhaman

“Persuasion is achieved by the speaker’s personal character when the speech is so spoken as to make us think him credible.”

Aristotle

“Don’t hesitate to use lies carefully — the goal is to survive; morality is a luxury affordable by winner.”

Djibril Mouhaman

“Never fight someone who is afraid of you”

- Djibril Mouhaman

“There are only two forces in the world: the sword and the mind. In the long run, the sword will always be conquered by the mind.”

-Napoleon Bonaparte (mis-attributed or at least unverified)

“A small opponent is never small if you ignore them long enough.”

Djibril Mouhaman

“A humiliated enemy fights to the death. A graceful exit makes them weak; humiliation makes them desperate.”

Djibril Mouhaman

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Mindfulness training improves stress coping and performance under pressure

A 2025 study showed that mindfulness training helped military personnel maintain better stress coping abilities and improved performance during demanding training weeks

Florentine Codex

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Aztec thought and culture studies

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20th century historical analysis based on Nahuatl sources

Kodak invented the digital camera in 1975 but did not commercialize it

Kodak’s decline and bankruptcy are documented: after losing market dominance with the rise of digital photography, Kodak had to file for bankruptcy under Chapter 11 in 2012